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Planning
a party

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IT'S A BIRD, IT'S A PLANE, IT'S
MIDGETMAN!!



**Mild-mannered
National Security Adviser
Brent Scowcroft and
the superpowers' START**

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Georgia Democratic Sen. Sam Nunn

Ask again what you can do for your country

By John B. Judis

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Politicians are sometimes able to develop programs that become a symbol of what they stand for—John Kennedy's Peace Corps proposal during the 1960 campaign, for instance, or conservative Republicans' Kemp-Roth tax cut of the late '70s. Now the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC), founded in March 1985 to move the party toward the center, is trying to provide Democrats with a program that will have the same type of magnetic quality.

On January 25 Sens. Sam Nunn (D-GA) and Chuck Robb (D-VA) and Rep. David McCurdy (D-OK) introduced the DLC's proposal for a new voluntary and federally funded Citizens Corps to be made up of high school graduates and senior citizens. After serving in either the civilian or military branch of the corps, young men and women would receive vouchers that could be used to finance college or vocational education. Senior citizens would serve as supervisors of the civilian branch.

The DLC's proposal is an attempt to instill a sense of

civic responsibility and national purpose in an era dominated by free-market individualism. "It is time for political leadership to focus on collective responsibilities that have fallen by the wayside during the Reagan years," the DLC says in its booklet about the idea, *Citizenship and National Service*. The proposal draws on an important and often neglected strain in American progressivism. It invokes John Kennedy's inaugural statement, "Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country." The program's sponsors could, however, just as easily have cited Theodore Roosevelt, Herbert Croly and other progressives who were trying to counter the centrifugal and often destructive tendencies of the market through a "new nationalism."

A Citizens Corps could also have significant practical ramifications. It might help bridge the social gap between ghetto minorities and working-class whites—an objective that school integration has clearly failed to achieve. And it might offer on a broader scale the kind of upward mobility that the military and the GI Bill have provided. During the '80s, both minority and low-income college enrollment has been dropping dramatically. Both young people and senior citizens could be given useful public tasks that would benefit the entire society—for instance, teaching reading to the illiterate, helping in notoriously understaffed mental hospitals and serving in the growing number of state conservation corps.

The core of the corps: Here's how the program would work for typical high school graduates. They would have a choice of joining the civilian or military branch of the program. In the civilian corps they would work for one of the state or local arms of the program, modeled on Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) or California's Conservation Corps. They would be paid a minimal wage, but would receive a \$10,000 education voucher for one year and \$20,000 for two years in the program. If they joined the military they would receive lower pay than the career enlistee, but would get \$24,000 in vouchers after two years' service. Since military salaries would be higher than civilian pay, it's unlikely that the program would threaten military recruiting.

The DLC acknowledges that the proposal would perpetuate certain inequities in college enrollment—children of the rich, for instance, would not need to join the corps in order to go to college—but argues that by offering increased financial aid, it would make college enrollment more equitable than it presently is. The DLC also defends requiring service in order to be eligible for a voucher. "A prevailing ethos of entitlement—the notion that any segment of society has a permanent right to favors and privileges bestowed by the government," it writes. "In place of a politics based on group interest and ever-expanding entitlements, we would substitute a new social compact based on reciprocal obligation and civic duty."

But the social compact would not extend to the wealthy. To remedy this, the Citizens Corps would either have to be made mandatory or the student loan program will have to be retained. Yet both measures would vastly increase the cost to the government.

When Nunn and Robb started the DLC, liberals characterized the organization as a "conservative white boys' club." But the group was never that conservative or white. Its leaders included Rep. Richard Gephardt (D-MO)—whose former aide Alvin From now runs the DLC—plus Arizona Gov. Bruce Babbitt and House budget chairman William Gray (D-PA). Its Citizens Corps proposal, a version of which was advanced by Gary Hart in 1984, is being backed by card-carrying liberals like Sen. Barbara Mikulski (D-MD).

But even a united Nunn-and-Mikulski front may not get the program adopted by this Congress. Like most schemes that arrive freshly picked in Congress, this one is full of bugs. The Citizens Corps threatens two important groups—unions and the military. The unions are worried about teenagers and senior citizens getting paid sub-minimum wage to do public sector jobs that could be paid at regular negotiated rates. The DLC has tried to get around the problem by placing union leaders on the program's local governing boards and by writing in assurances that Citizens Corps jobs would not be used to displace existing workers. But in a declining economy, the conflict between labor and the Citizens Corps would be unavoidable.

Hell no, it won't dough: The military and its congressional allies, like Veterans Committee Chairman Rep. G.V. "Sonny" Montgomery (D-MS), are worried that the corps could undermine recruitment for its all-volunteer force program. While the military presently pays enlistees as much as many first-year public school teachers receive, it does not provide post-service education benefits comparable to those of the Citizens Corps.

But what Montgomery thinks is bad for the services may be good for the country. The DLC writes, "We believe a further influx of citizen soldiers would infuse our professional Army with more civic content, preventing it from becoming dangerously isolated from the society it protects." Indeed, the Citizen Corps could be a step toward a smaller and more demographically representative post-Cold War armed forces.

The biggest obstacle ahead, however, will be finding money for the program. It appears that the DLC was extremely optimistic about the program's costs. According to Northwestern University sociologist Charles Moskos, who devised the plan, it would cost about \$5.3 billion to sustain a Civilian Corps of 700,000 members. (The cost of 100,000 military recruits would be absorbed by the Penta-

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gon's volunteer force budget.) But Moskos does not count the cost of vouchers, which for 700,000 graduates would total about \$7 billion a year. Instead, he assumes that the Citizens Corps program would simply replace the existing \$8 billion student loan program.

The hitch is that the current student aid programs reach more students than the Citizens Corps would initially. Presently, for instance, Pell grants alone provide aid to 3 million students from lower-income families. Clearly, at the beginning the Citizens Corps and student aid programs would have to co-exist—meaning an initial program cost of \$12 billion or more for the corps. With the current deficit, Congress is not likely to commit itself to this kind of funding.

To get the program adopted, its sponsors will either have to scale it down to the point where it is a largely symbolic exercise like VISTA, or they will have to mount a nationwide political campaign to convince citizens that it is worth the cost, even if that means increasing taxes. Buoyed by the program's enthusiastic initial reception—the new Senate majority leader, George Mitchell (D-ME), moved it to third place on the Senate docket—its sponsors haven't yet faced up to this difficult choice.

A corps without a cause: Whether or not Congress immediately adopts it, the program may also lack the political punch of either Kennedy's Peace Corps or the Kemp-Roth tax cut. The DLC's program has a rationale, but it lacks a political context to give it meaning and urgency. Kennedy's Peace Corps proposal came at a time when Americans defined their national purpose as protecting the free world against Soviet-led totalitarianism, but had grown weary of bomb shelter drills and nuclear brinkmanship. The Peace Corps appealed because it struck a positive, constructive note of ensuring freedom through peaceful rather than warlike means. Kemp-Roth appealed because it responded directly to Americans' fears that the government was destroying the economy.

The DLC's program is framed as a response to the destructive effect of Reagan individualism, but this is a danger more easily acknowledged by congressional Democrats than by ordinary citizens. In a deeper sense, the proposal does respond to Americans' sense that the society is falling apart—manifested most clearly in the concern about drugs and schools—but it responds to this fear too subtly and indirectly.

Thus the DLC's proposal is unlikely to mobilize a new Democratic majority. But if it is not the last word, it is at least the first word from a Democratic Party that appeared to lose its voice after Michael Dukakis' November defeat.

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By Alan Gilchrist
and Louise Halper

WHAT IS THE NEW ADMINISTRATION'S ATTITUDE toward the 50 percent strategic nuclear weapons cut negotiated by Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachov in the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START)? George Bush's new national security adviser, Brent Scowcroft, links the still-unsigned treaty's future with the development of the Midgetman missile. But a little-publicized study by a high-ranking weapons scientist concludes that START cuts would not require any change in the current nuclear arsenal in order to preserve U.S. retaliatory ability.

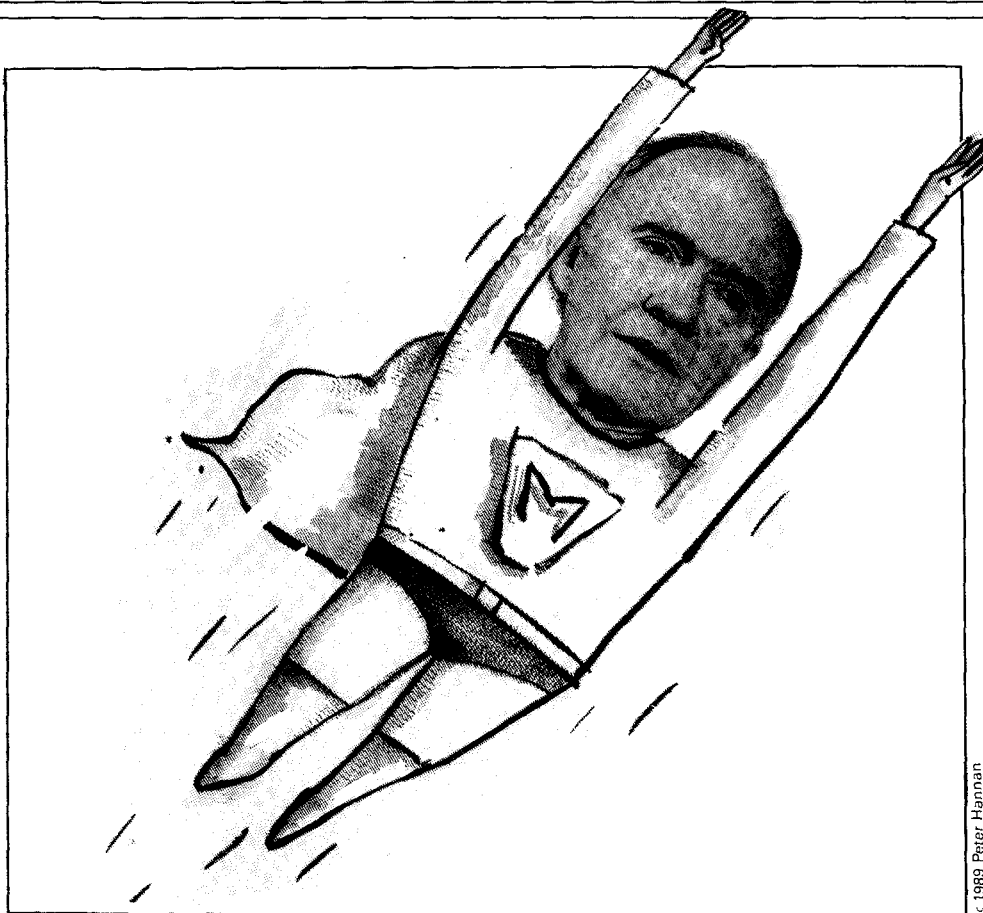
Scowcroft is a retired Air Force general and former national security adviser to President Gerald Ford. Most recently he was a resident pundit at Kissinger Associates, a distinction also shared by Lawrence Eagleburger, now the deputy secretary of state. With John Tower's nomination as secretary of defense tarnished by questions raised in the confirmation process, and with Secretary of State James Baker lacking national security experience, it would not be surprising if Scowcroft emerges as the major actor in Soviet-American negotiations. He has already promised a thorough review of the U.S. negotiating position at the START talks and does not rule out substantive changes.

Some of Scowcroft's ideas on defense policy are well known; not all are consistent with those of the Reagan administration. His positions on issues in the START process are not all of a piece. On the positive side, he has been skeptical about Star Wars from the beginning. His appointment is an indication that the Star Wars deadlock will no longer hold up arms control.

Naming Scowcroft also means that U.S. opposition to mobile missiles, long considered an unrealistic negotiating position, may be dropped. He, along with Sens. Sam Nunn (D-GA) and Al Gore (D-TN), is a strong proponent of the single-warhead mobile missile known as Midgetman. In fact, in a late January interview with David Brinkley, Scowcroft appeared to oppose a START agreement unless the Midgetman missile is developed. According to him, START's ability to safeguard national security depends on whether the Midgetman missile is built.

Scowcroft's strategy: Why does Scowcroft tie START to Midgetman? He says the question posed by START is not simply whether a 50 percent cutback provides enough warheads to ensure deterrence, but whether the basing mode of the remaining warheads ensures their survivability. His position is not without its appeal. Scowcroft begins with deterrence: security is enhanced by increasing the survivability of nuclear forces after a first strike. The logic of this position is that no adversary will strike first if it cannot secure itself against retaliation. The more secure a retaliatory force, the less likely a first strike will be launched against it.

Midgetman is survivable and thus retaliatory. First of all, it is small enough to be highly mobile, making it a hard target to locate and hit. Moreover, nuclear targeting requires that at least two warheads be targeted on each warhead delivery system. Since two warheads must be aimed at each Midgetman missile and its single warhead, the destruction of a Midgetman missile yields a net loss to an adversary. But if two warheads can



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Able to raise huge deficits with a single missile system

destroy many warheads on a single delivery system—like the 10-warhead MX missile—that system is a logical first-strike target, one whose destruction yields a net gain. MX must be launched first or risk its destruction to an adversary who strikes first.

The Reagan administration's proposal to make the MX mobile by putting it on a rail car still does not give MX the survivability of Midgetman. As Scowcroft says, MX and Midgetman are really "not comparable" weapons systems; in fact, Scowcroft has publicly questioned whether, in light of its size, the MX could ever be made mobile enough to evade a first strike on short notice.

It is not clear whether Scowcroft proposes replacing MX with Midgetman or simply supplementing it. In any case, Scowcroft's support for Midgetman does not threaten a START agreement from the Soviet point of view. Soviet strategic planners already support missile mobility for the same reasons Scowcroft does; indeed, it was the Reagan administration that had proposed banning mobility for land-based missiles.

The real conflict that support for Midgetman creates is not between Scowcroft and the Soviets, but between Scowcroft and the federal deficit. The same feature that makes the Midgetman unattractive as a target—its single warhead—also makes it very expensive to build. The economies achieved by piling 10 warheads on a big rocket are not possible with Midgetman. Even with congressional limitations on Star Wars spending, it is difficult to see how the administration can reduce the deficit with "no new taxes" and still begin Midgetman development. If Scowcroft really believes START is a non-starter without Midgetman, both the missile and the treaty could be victims of the budget crisis.

Point of departure: Scowcroft's preference for START with Midgetman is under-

standable, but an outright refusal to back START without Midgetman would not be in the U.S.' national security interests. The notion that START security depends on Midgetman and cannot be assured with a mere reduction of the current weapons configuration is unfounded, according to a little-publicized study by Michael May, retired associate director of the Department of Energy's Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, one of the nation's two major nuclear weapons development centers. May and Scowcroft both addressed the American Association for the Advancement of Science's Annual Colloquium on Science, Arms Control and National Security shortly before the November 8 election. While Scowcroft expressed some reservations about START, May said that START-generated cuts in the current arsenal would not threaten U.S. retaliatory capacity, even without reconfiguration or modernization of forces.

Scowcroft's love for the Midgetman could slow arms control and add to the federal budget crisis.

May compared the U.S.' ability to retaliate after START reductions in several different cases, including proportional reductions in the land-sea-air triad without Midgetman, and triad reductions assuming Midgetman as part of the force structure. He found that Midgetman would increase U.S. ability to retaliate, but concluded that, even if Midgetman is not built, the destructive capability of the U.S.' surviving forces after a first strike would not be hurt by START reductions. Said May, "Reductions in numbers of strategic weapons in the degree contemplated by

START would not affect adversely...the survivability of [U.S.] forces or the bulk of our target coverage capability." This view was apparently shared by the Reagan administration, which had contemplated START reductions in the current arsenal without the addition of Midgetman.

Scowcroft has promised a review of the START negotiations by the new Bush team before talks are resumed at Geneva. He might conclude that May and the previous administration are right and that START does not absolutely require a commitment to develop Midgetman. But even if Scowcroft decides Midgetman is an indispensable part of a START-reduced strategic arsenal, Congress still may not fund it. This would leave the U.S. with a large MX force, but no Midgetman. America would have the MX, a potential first-strike weapon, but not the reductions that would allow the safer deterrent strategy and fewer nuclear weapons. If May is right and Midgetman, however desirable, is not essential, will the Bush administration nonetheless hold a START treaty hostage until Congress agrees to pay for Midgetman?

Midgetman will surely be the focus of intense bargaining between Congress and the administration in future budget cycles. The size of the Midgetman development program is negotiable. Ways to make the missile more cost-effective are already being explored, according to Nunn, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee. In linking START to Midgetman, Scowcroft may simply be using congressional support for START to assure that Midgetman is developed. If he has a genuine desire for greater stability, Scowcroft will not allow the outcome of the Midgetman debate to impede START's progress. But if the Midgetman-START linkage is masking Scowcroft's deeper skepticism about a 50 percent reduction in strategic nuclear weapons, the dramatic breakthroughs that have been so close to realization in the two years since Reykjavik are in jeopardy.

Whether or not the new administration likes START, the prospect of substantial arms reductions is now and will continue to be popular. If Bush must take bad medicine to deal with the deficit at the beginning of his term, an arms reduction treaty in his third year will get rid of the nasty taste in time for the 1992 election. Thus the administration will likely try to stall the Soviets, who are eager to conclude the treaty as soon as possible. Indeed, Scowcroft's review could be part of that stalling strategy: this month's planned resumption of the START talks has already been postponed until Scowcroft completes his promised review of the American force structure and negotiating position.

When Henry Kissinger, representing Bush, returned from a January visit to Moscow, he reported that he expected a Bush-Gorbachov summit within 12 months. The U.S., he said, was prepared to continue to negotiate with the Soviets. No great fan of Reagan nuclear strategy in regard to either START or Star Wars, Kissinger stopped short of saying that START remained the basis of whatever negotiations would take place in 1989.

The Gorbachov factor: But Gorbachov, the Crazy Eddie of arms reductions, will not sit by and wait for the Bush administration to decide whether to continue the START process. In his December speech to the

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By Joel Bleifuss

Christic Institute fights to survive

The Christic Institute's suit against a pantheon of Iran-contra co-conspirators hit the rocks recently when U.S. District Judge James King of Miami ordered the organization to pay \$1 million for the defendants' legal fees. King had earlier dismissed the suit. The Washington-based group had charged the 14 defendants with orchestrating the bombing of a press conference in La Penca, Nicaragua, at which contra leader Eden Pastora was speaking. Defendants include key Iran-contra figures John Hull, Albert Hakim, retired Maj. Gen. Richard Secord, Robert Owen and retired Maj. Gen. John Singlaub. The institute is currently appealing Judge King's June 23, 1988, dismissal of the case. It will also appeal his latest decision. But that appeal could be difficult to execute. The group is caught in a Catch-22, says Dykstra, the group's communications director. "In order to pursue an appeal of this we have to prove that we have the money to pay for legal costs if we lose. And if we don't have the \$1 million, then we can't appeal and have to pay the money. In other words, if we can't prove to the satisfaction of a bonding company that we have \$1 million in assets, we're still free to appeal the decision, but the defendants will be free within 10 days to seize our building, phones, computers and everything else. Essentially they obliterate the organization that is pursuing the appeal." Dykstra says his group intends to raise the bond. "It is a matter of life or death for this organization," he says. Further, according to Dykstra, if the \$1 million judgment stands it could set a disastrous precedent for public-interest litigation.

Christic critic

For the past two years *In These Times* has extensively reported on the shipments of illegal arms to the contras, the drug running that was associated with this covert operation and the Christic Institute's attempts to put the men behind these illicit activities on trial. Where did Christic Institute run aground?

• An analyst of U.S. policy in Central America, who asked to remain anonymous, offered this criticism of the Christic suit: "They spun a long conspiracy theory whereby their energy focused really not on the La Penca bombing itself but on 30 years of covert operations. In their attempt to tie 30 years of history together, which in many cases involved stretching the truth to its outermost limits—and that's being kind—facts were distorted. The same type of sloppiness unfortunately pervaded the legal presentation of the case, which relied upon sources whose credibility, in some cases, was never firmly established and whose stories were simply not corroborated. But they have also done a lot to their credit. They collected, through their depositions, extremely important information and have to be commended for advancing the documentary base of the Iran-contra operations. And they built a grass-roots outreach campaign on issues the public needs to be educated about—illegal arms shipments to Central America, drug smuggling and covert operations. The suit has not been in vain, but the end result is to leave both Christic Institute and the people who believed fully in the Christic story on the defensive. People who were obviously involved in criminal behavior—not necessarily involved in the La Penca bombing but many other illicit activities, like illegal arms supplies to the contras—come out looking like innocent babes in the woods."

• The Christic Institute's Peter Dykstra responds: "I don't think our work has made any of the defendants look innocent. That's absurd. Perhaps the most obvious and current example is John Hull, now incarcerated in Costa Rica, where the Organization of Judicial Investigation, the equivalent of the FBI, is seeking to charge him with drug smuggling, gun running and espionage on behalf of the U.S. One critical point for us is that [Judge King's] legal decision [against the institute] is so far from the norm and so outside established legal precedent that it can only be interpreted as a harsh signal that you aren't supposed to take the intelligence community to court. The left is in a bad way if anyone rationalizes that we should be made a scapegoat because all of the men in Iran-contra have virtually gotten off the hook. The left has a history of cannibalism in its criticism that is very debilitating and may help explain why someone like George Bush can go from suspect to president in less than a year."



Feuding thugs: Gen. Manuel Contreras, above; Manuel Contreras Jr., above right; and Joaquin Molina, right.



'Oh, you stupid imbecile! You've shot my father!'

Documents filed with Chile's Supreme Court last month claim that Gen. Manuel Contreras ordered the 1976 assassination in Washington, D.C., of former Foreign Minister Orlando Letelier, an outspoken opponent of Chile's leader, Gen. Augusto Pinochet.

The papers, submitted by Chile's former ambassador to Washington, José Miguel Barros, constitute the first tacit admission by a Pinochet appointee that the Chilean government was responsible for the car bombing that killed Letelier and his colleague, Ronni Moffitt of the Institute for Policy Studies.

Although the U.S. has tried for 10 years to extradite Contreras, his close friendship with Pinochet and his influence on the Chilean Supreme Court have impeded the proceedings.

Now Contreras has his hands full with another murder—this one allegedly committed by his son.

After the 1973 military overthrow of Salvador Allende that brought Pinochet to power, a secret police force known as the National Intelligence Directorate (DINA) was set up to eradicate the Chilean left. Contreras headed the organization that operated 15 concentration camps, employed 10,000 police and killed without fear of reprisals, according to the Spanish daily *El País*.

But Letelier's murder provoked worldwide outrage, even from the FBI and CIA. So Pinochet's regime established a new secret police organization called the National Information Center (CNI).

Ex-CNI agents have said they were more discreet than their DINA predecessors. Instead of littering the roadside with corpses as DINA did, CNI agents would dump their victims from airplanes into the

Pacific, after having gutted the corpses to ensure that they sank.

But nobody hid the corpse last fall when Contreras' son Manuel allegedly shot the CNI's Joaquin Molina.

Joaquin Molina was known as "the most evil colonel in Chile," a reputation he earned while running one of Contreras' detention centers. After DINA's fall from grace, Joaquin Molina joined CNI, where he rose to be its fourth-highest-ranking official.

Last October 29, Joaquin Molina's 17-year-old daughter Tania threw a party in Santiago. Molina chaperoned while his daughter entertained her guests—more than 50 sons and daughters of secret police and military personnel. Among them were her boyfriend Manuel Contreras Jr. and Danko Derpic, the son of Joaquin Molina's boss at CNI.

At 3 a.m. Derpic decided he had had enough of the party and headed for the door. Tania Molina waited for him to say goodbye. The pair embraced and Tania started kissing Derpic, according to press reports.

Manuel Contreras Jr., a 26-year-old tae kwan do expert who packs a pistol and keeps a bag of hand grenades in his car, attacked Derpic in a jealous rage. Joaquin Molina stepped in to break up the fight. Then the younger Contreras allegedly pulled his gun and shot Molina 12 times. "That's the problem with that boy," Joaquin Molina's girlfriend, Alicia Saez, told reporters. "He'll shoot for any reason."

"Once when we went out to eat, Manuel saw a homosexual couple walking down the street. He started shooting at them. The restaurant owner was horrified," she said.

After the Molina shooting the younger Contreras went into hiding while Tania Molina took refuge at Gen. Contreras' house. Tania Molina told a press conference at Gen.

Contreras' private security company, Alfa Omega, that her father was armed and drunk at the time of his death. Framed by pictures of Gen. Pinochet and Contreras, Tania said that the younger Contreras had fired in self-defense.

Meanwhile, Alfa Omega and its 4,000 "employees" went into action. Witnesses were harassed, according to *El País*. Contreras' lawyer threatened to dissolve Alicia Saez's job in the military. A wheel fell off another witness' car while he was driving. The military court, which normally acts swiftly, fumbled, giving Gen. Contreras time to "buy witnesses," according to critics affiliated with the CNI.

But the case is now back in the civilian courts where Manuel Contreras Jr. will be tried for murder. Opposition to Gen. Contreras is building. In letters to the press, CNI agents have asked, "Will we have to wait for an opposition government to get justice?"

The "September 11 Command" death squad, composed of retired military officials, has joined in the chorus. In a letter to Tania Molina, the death squad wrote, "We know that you perhaps love that stupid imbecile Manuel Contreras Jr. Stay away from him. We have decided that he must pay with his life. It is the only way to avenge your father's death."

The firestorm has eroded Gen. Contreras' aura of impunity, perhaps damaging his ability to continue warding off extradition for the 1976 murder of Orlando Letelier.

Widow Isabel Letelier is not so sure. "This affair proves that Gen. Contreras is still a dangerous and powerful man," she told *In These Times*.

She worries that "another generation of thugs" will continue the senseless violence in Chile. "When you train people to be thugs, sooner or later they'll go for each other's throats." —Kevin O'Donnell

Evil Olympians lock up good Titan

Lyndon LaRouche is in prison after being handed a 15-year sentence late last month for mail fraud, tax evasion and conspiracy to defraud his supporters of at least \$30 million.

The sentence could signal the last chapter in the decline of LaRouche, a charismatic former New Left intellectual who has taken his estimated 400 followers on a 20-year mystery tour into far-right politics. But LaRouche's imprisonment could also boost his political organization into the '90s with renewed energy and purpose.

LaRouche, 66, and six followers are going to prison for a relatively simple series of crimes. Federal prosecutors convinced an Alexandria, Va., jury that LaRouche had ordered his followers to convince supporters, especially elderly people, to make loans or donations to LaRouche's National Caucus of Labor Committees (NCLC). The group didn't repay the loans, and many people who donated small sums with credit cards later discovered the LaRouchites had charged thousands of dollars to their accounts. LaRouche plans to appeal the conviction.

Researcher Chip Berlet, who has called for investigations into the NCLC fund-raising methods since he first wrote about LaRouche 14 years ago, said that LaRouche's sentencing has only intensified NCLC's efforts. "Now they are calling people and telling them that because of the government prosecution they can't repay the loans. And then they are asking for money to help defend LaRouche."

The LaRouchites believe their leader's ideas have elevated them above the common masses. According to LaRouche, an evil conspiracy has shaped all world history. Articles in *New Solidarity*, the NCLC's now-defunct newspaper, tell how in the days of Atlantis, evil Olympians, irrational demon worshippers, warred with good Titans, "city builders" equipped with the power of reason.

The Olympians won and have ruled the world ever since. Only LaRouche, and the select followers able to comprehend LaRouche's ideas, have taken a stand against the Olympians' efforts to bring on a new dark age with drugs, famine and, most recently, AIDS.

The NCLC insists that "British Zionist" dope merchants, particularly Queen Elizabeth II and Henry Kissinger, head this Olympian conspir-

acy. And Mikhail Gorbachov recently gained center stage in their demonology.

LaRouche's notions are deranged, but the NCLC's totalitarian internal politics thrive on this far-fetched political mythology. If NCLC members question orders, it is considered proof they have succumbed to the conspiracy against their leader.

LaRouche doesn't have the glamour or talk show appeal of, say, the skinheads, but there are aspects of LaRouche's message that, in the hands of talented organizers, appeal to enough supporters who in turn fund the NCLC executive staff's efforts to penetrate international business and political communities.

For example, LaRouche argues that there are no limits to technological growth. The NCLC regularly lambastes environmentalists. A recent issue of the NCLC's magazine *Executive Intelligence Review* announced, "Greenhouse effect hoaxers seek world dictatorship."

As the Earth's environmental crisis deepens such a message may hold a great appeal to people—underinformed by the mass media—who are suddenly forced to face the fact that their way of living must change.

—William K. Burke

After 20 years, it's Time to Go

LONDON—Commenting on Northern Ireland recently, Clare Short, a Labor member of Britain's Parliament, said, "After 20 years of conflict, I am convinced that we shall see Irish unity and independence in our lifetimes."

Clare Short is no stranger to Northern Ireland. Her family is from Crossmaglen in County Armagh, home of some of the most wretched violence the North has known. Now an influential Labor Party spokesperson, she is the catalyst behind Time to Go, a new initiative that calls for a British withdrawal from Northern Ireland.

Launched last June with the support of 100 British politicians, academics and artists, Time to Go is a year-long campaign commemorating the 20th anniversary of the August 1969 deployment of troops in Northern Ireland to quell civil unrest.

"We are calling for a year of action leading up to the anniversary," Short said at the group's charter-signing last June. "It will face up to the lack of progress in that 20 years: the 3,000 dead, the diminished standards of criminal justice and unemployment."

"We are saying a peaceful settlement in Northern Ireland entails a British withdrawal and we have got to get on with the debate about how that is to be accomplished, leaving behind a stable system. We are not talking about pulling everything out and letting everything go."

"For the last 10 years, opinion polls [in Britain] have been saying Britain should withdraw," she said. "But that proposition is not part of

the legitimate political debate. No major political party advocates it. Anyone who talks about it is immediately charged with being a covert IRA [Irish Republican Army] supporter. Our political debate in Britain is paralyzed as a consequence of that accusation and fear."

There are limits to the success a movement such as Time to Go can enjoy in Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's Britain. Despite what the opinion polls might suggest, funding for the movement is strained and publicity hard to come by. The lack of a wholesale endorsement of Time to Go by Short's own Labor Party has not helped either.

Nevertheless, the organization continues to grow. Already civil lib-

ertarians and troops-out groups in Ireland, the U.S. and Europe have expressed interest in the movement. Time to Go plans to stage a large demonstration carnival in London on Aug. 12, 1989, the anniversary of the armed occupation.

Short told *In These Times* that "the overwhelming majority of the British people believe that the present settlement in Northern Ireland is a disaster. Neither the intransigence of loyalism or the activities of the IRA should be allowed to prevent the search for a lasting solution. Time to Go is intended to be a bottom-up campaign, engaging new forces in an open and honest debate about the future of Ireland."

—Jay Giebus

Clare Short, Labor MP from Birmingham Ladywood.



It sticks in your craw

It appears that Edgar Allen Price, the black man whose death on February 2 in Tampa, Fla., set off two nights of minor rioting, may be the most recent person to have died from a condition that regularly kills people in police custody—positional asphyxiation. As Texas Assistant Attorney General David Hess told *In These Times* last summer, if put in an awkward position a person can die of asphyxiation when his or her body weight restricts the air passage "like a pinched piece of plastic tubing" (see *In These Times*, June 8, 1988). Hess describes the condition as a "strange phenomenon that has been found to occur in correctional institutions." He made that statement in reference to the March 16, 1988, death of Kenneth Simpson, a black unemployed construction worker who suffocated as he lay handcuffed and shackled on the floor of a Cleveland, Texas, jail. In Tampa, Price never made it to jail. He died from the condition as he lay tied and handcuffed in a police patrol car. In both cases the men were stricken with the positional asphyxiation after fighting with police.

They've got a line on news

Q: During the period between Jan. 1, 1985 and April 30, 1988, on what TV news program ...were 89 percent of the guests men? ...were 92 percent of the guests white? ...were 80 percent of the U.S. guests professionals, government officials or corporate representatives? ...were only 5 percent of the guests representatives of public-interest groups and less than 2 percent labor or racial ethnic leaders? ...were Henry Kissinger, Alexander Haig, Elliott Abrams and Jerry Falwell the most frequent guests? ...were 22 programs focused on Nicaragua but not one on El Salvador, Honduras or Guatemala?

A: ABC's *Nightline* with Ted Koppel. These are just some findings of an analysis of TV's premier news program by Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR), a New York-based, left-leaning media watch group. The report, "Are you on the *Nightline* guest list?" by William Hoynes and David Croteau of Boston College, provides details of what the 5-7 million U.S. households that watch the show see each night. In the introduction to their study, Hoynes and Croteau write: "Overwhelmingly, it is white, male representatives of powerful institutions who interpret the world for *Nightline*'s viewers. The views of one class, race, and gender dominate *Nightline*, thereby reinforcing the notion that non-elites must play by the rules set by the upper classes, which have the power to define reality for society as a whole. *Nightline* helps to set limits on public discourse. The range of guests helps to define the limits of legitimate debate and stakes out the limits of dissenting opinions. Most importantly, the process of exclusion plays a role in delegitimizing positions: voices that are regularly and systematically excluded from *Nightline* seem to have no role in legitimate public discussion. These processes of legitimization and limitation are at the core of why *Nightline* is a politically influential program. By its limited range of guests and topics, *Nightline* conveys a distorted vision of the domestic political scene, portraying it as free of major conflict and devoid of challenging views. *Nightline* presents a picture of the world which is startlingly similar to that presented by the U.S. government, a world-view in which terrorism is rampant, with U.S. citizens as targets for no apparent reason; where the U.S. is under siege from without. This world-view—as reflected and promoted by a narrow range of guests—makes *Nightline* a fundamentally conservative political program, a program which serves the interests of those who already wield power. Its significance lies in its role as an intermediary between policy-makers and the public. *Nightline* host Ted Koppel indirectly acknowledged this in a recent *Life* interview in which he said he felt he was qualified, in some respects, to be secretary of state 'because part of the job is to sell American foreign policy, not only to Congress but to the American public.'"

Who's missing the point? Responding to the study that was released last week, Koppel told the *Los Angeles Times* Judith Michaelson, "I like studies like this. They do give us an opportunity to re-examine what we do, how we do it. And sometimes its quite true we get into a rut." He acknowledged that *Nightline* has looked at the problem of terrorism "much too narrowly" and not done "as many programs as we ought [to] on state terrorism," for example the death squads in El Salvador. But overall Koppel believes the FAIR critique is "missing the point... ours is a news program. It is not meant to be a forum to give all divergent views in the U.S. equal access."

By Zack Nauth

NEW ORLEANS

KKK boss joins GOP— and may join legislature



David Duke in his Klan days.

FIVE DAYS AFTER MARTIN LUTHER KING'S Birthday last month, former Ku Klux Klansman and presidential candidate David Duke finished first in a field of seven contenders in an open primary for a Louisiana House of Representatives seat. Polls show the February 18 runoff, between Duke and Republican John Treen, the brother of a former governor, is up for grabs.

Duke's 33 percent in a suburban New Orleans-area district, followed by a second-place finisher with only 19 percent, shocked most political observers and sent the state's Republican Party leaders scrambling to distance themselves from the recently converted Republican.

Duke, 38, a former grand wizard of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, had been written off to the lunatic fringe, but he surged late in the campaign. Some observers credited his strong finish to voters' reactions to any of a number of recent racial episodes: the unrest in Miami's black Overtown section after a white officer shot a black motorcyclist, the beating of several whites during the King parade in New Orleans by a band of black youths or the murder-a-day spree in New Orleans through the first 20 days of January.

Electoral wizardry: Duke's strong showing was a surprise less for what he stood for than for his former affiliation. Few believed a candidate even marginally associated with the Klan could win broad-based, popular support. The public segregationist movement ended in Louisiana in the mid-'60s when officials gave up in the face of federal intervention. But by the end of this campaign, Duke was setting the agenda and most of the candidates, including Treen, found themselves in complete agreement with Duke.

Duke got substantial votes from every precinct in the wealthy conservative Jefferson Parish district, drawing most heavily from the upper-middle-class and middle-working-class areas that border New Orleans. Many of these residents moved from majority-black New Orleans across the 17th Street canal to the 99.6 percent white suburban district in the hopes of escaping crime and racially integrated neighborhoods and schools.

Duke plays, like all such demagogic figures, on people's insecurities and the resentments that often surface in hard economic times. Louisiana has the nation's highest unemployment rate, while New Orleans is being ravaged by the whole panoply of ills stemming from a Third-World-level poverty. Duke attacks issues such as crime and drugs—that everyone agrees are problems—and provides a convenient scapegoat. He calls illegitimacy “the greatest source of our economic woes. Many welfare mothers are having illegitimate children faster than our taxes can be raised to pay for them all.” The heart of his appeal is proposing to solve the state's economic and social woes on the backs of minorities rather than by raising taxes on upper-income residents.

That grand old party, the Klan: Duke was born in Tulsa, Okla., where he was attracted to the doctrine of white supremacy after taking the pro-segregation side in a high school debate. At 17 he joined the Klan, participated in demonstrations and became an outspoken advocate on the Louisiana State

University campus where he was a student. By 1973 he was elected grand dragon of Louisiana's Klan branch, and a year later he was elected grand wizard of the national Klan.

In that position he de-emphasized violence and overt racism and began talking about the social issues that mainstream politicians were talking about, such as immigration and affirmative action. He ran for the Louisiana Senate in 1975 and 1979, picking up a third of the vote. A year after the second election he quit the Klan, saying he was disenchanted with its violent image. “Just when it seemed we were making some progress, some idiot somewhere in some other group would go and do something violent against a minority,” he recently told a newspaper. Duke denies rumors he was forced out after he was caught selling secret Klan membership lists to rival groups. Last year Duke ran for president as an Independent Populist after failing to gain the Democratic nomination.

Duke now tries to disassociate himself from the Klan, although a business listing for the Klan in the New Orleans phone book still rings at his office, which is also headquarters for the group he now heads, the National Association for the Advancement of White People (NAAWP). Duke says the Klan listing makes it easier for the media to find him. Of course, it also makes it easier for voters to distinguish him from the pack of ultraconservatives running for the legislature from Jefferson Parish. A Klanwatch official told the *New Orleans Times Picayune* that Duke is no longer a member of the Klan, but said the NAAWP is “the Klan in disguise.”

The NAAWP, which Duke claims has 25,000 members nationwide and 3,000 in the New Orleans area, is dedicated to fighting affirmative action programs and protecting the rights of whites. Duke promotes his ideals through the group's newsletter, which includes articles proposing that the U.S. be split into several nations to separate whites

from “unassimilable minorities” and ads for a Duke videotape on “the truth about the Holocaust.” Duke says he believes there are major biological differences that make whites superior to blacks in some areas and he doesn't want America to wind up looking like “Haiti, Brazil or Mexico.”

LOUISIANA

The yuppie racist: If all this is familiar stuff, Duke's approach is not. Duke is no stereotypical Klansman, and that's the key to broadening his appeal. He doesn't look or sound like any of those ugly, snarling meat-heads depicted in *Mississippi Burning*. He's good-looking, polite and charming. He wears nice suits. He explains his positions by stating the obvious—that welfare has not eliminated poverty, for instance—then concludes that welfare recipients must reproduce less. He rarely mentions blacks directly, except to say he is their best friend.

“I am the only candidate who has concrete proposals to reduce the illegitimate birthrate and break the cycle of poverty that truly enslaves and harms the black race,” he stated in a letter to the editor. He denies that a proposal to offer housing and job training preferences to welfare mothers who accept sterilization is a racial issue. “The media reported it as black illegitimate welfare,” Duke said. “I've only said illegitimate. They're the ones who suppose illegitimate welfare recipients are black.” Duke knows voters will suppose the same thing and get his meaning, since his NAAWP membership is widely known. Although it is true that white welfare recipients outnumber blacks, a far higher percentage of blacks receive welfare, and they are the best and most visible target for white resentment that Duke and others—such as George Bush in the presidential campaign—have drawn on.

Of his former Klan affiliation, Duke says he is not a racist but a civil rights advocate. He recently told the Associated Press that “I believe in equal rights for everyone. That's what I've advocated, that's what I've

David Duke, former national Ku Klux Klan leader, has turned in his white sheets for nice suits and joined the Republican Party.

preached, that's what I believe in. The real racists are the ones who believe in affirmative action,” which he calls “massive government-sponsored discrimination” against whites.

Listening to Duke supporters talk about their candidate puts to rest any notions of his campaign's race-neutrality. A woman at a country club told the *New Orleans Times Picayune*, “We need to send the blacks a message.” A store owner who has a sign read-

ing “We do not accept food stamps” said white middle-class Americans are becoming “a forgotten people” because of minority programs.

Meanstream joins the radical: The dirty secret of the campaign is not Duke's past, but that most of his views are in the conservative mainstream. One newspaper columnist, bringing to mind King's stated preference for a Southern racist over a Northern racist, said Duke represented a more insidious threat than a Klansman—“bigotry in a well-tailored suit.” In the rush to condemn Duke, what the columnists and other commentators have overlooked is that well-tailored bigots are already serving in the Louisiana legislature and in other elective offices, black legislators and others say.

Jefferson Parish Sheriff Harry Lee, himself a Chinese-American, last year ordered his deputies to stop and question blacks found driving “rinky-dink cars” in white neighborhoods. Duke endorsed Lee's order, as well as efforts by state Rep. Quentin Dastugue to scale back or eliminate 10-percent minority set-asides in a state where blacks are 25 percent of the population. Duke's opponent, Jim Treen, is himself a former states' rights man, as was his brother Dave Treen, who was governor in 1980-84 and lost a federal judgeship when civil rights groups reminded Congress of his pro-segregation stand in the '60s.

When Gov. Buddy Roemer tried to pass a modest tax increase that jettisoned the old regressive sales tax for a more progressive income tax exempting the poor and hitting higher incomes, he was rebuffed with the solid opposition of Jefferson legislators, including the former representative whose seat Duke is now seeking. Instead, the anti-tax lawmakers called for massive cuts in social programs at a time when Louisiana's safety net is severely strained by budget cuts and people in need.

Black New Orleans Mayor Sidney Barthelmy, who has faced tremendous resistance from the legislature's rural and suburban caucuses to keep predominantly black New Orleans running, said Duke's success reflects a deep-seated bigotry and racism on a local and national level “that needs to be addressed.”

Despite the wide acceptance of Duke's ideas, the state's conservative power structure is pulling out all the stops to defeat Duke. The reason? Concern for the state's image. Roemer has said a Duke win would send “a terrible signal.” Treen said it would damage the state's image and “impair investment.”

But the voters are concerned with matters much closer to home. And the support for Duke in Jefferson Parish may mirror a growing racial polarization that is reflected in an apparent increase in racial incidents across the country. “The country and this region are moving in my direction politically,” Duke claims boldly.

If the campaign has any redeeming quality, it should at least remind voters and policymakers that most of the important issues today have a racial element that must be addressed with aggressive, positive solutions, or they'll be left to the David Dukes to answer in their own way. While Duke blames blacks, Jews and other minorities for the nation's problems, mainstream Republicans and Democrats have only themselves to blame for Duke.

Zack Nauth is a reporter for the *New Orleans Times Picayune*.

By David Moberg

CHICAGO

THE TRADING PITS OF CHICAGO'S FUTURES EXCHANGES normally whirl at a frenzied pace, driven by hope of instant fortune and fear of equally quick financial doom, as the raucous packs of speculators buy and sell promises for future delivery of everything from wheat and pork bellies to bonds and Japanese yen.

But a new cause of panic swept the pits in late January. It wasn't the anxiety on which traders thrive—usually triggered by natural catastrophes wiping out crops or governments raising interest rates. This time federal attorneys had begun handing out several hundred subpoenas in an investigation of illegal trading practices. At least five FBI agents, wired to tape-record incriminating conversations, began the probe more than two years ago.

On top of insider trading scandals on Wall Street, as well as the U.S. savings and loan debacle, the 1987 stock market crash, and unresolved Third World debt crises, this latest investigation further undermines the credibility of the world's increasingly volatile and deregulated financial system. Money corrupts, and easy money, it seems, corrupts more easily.

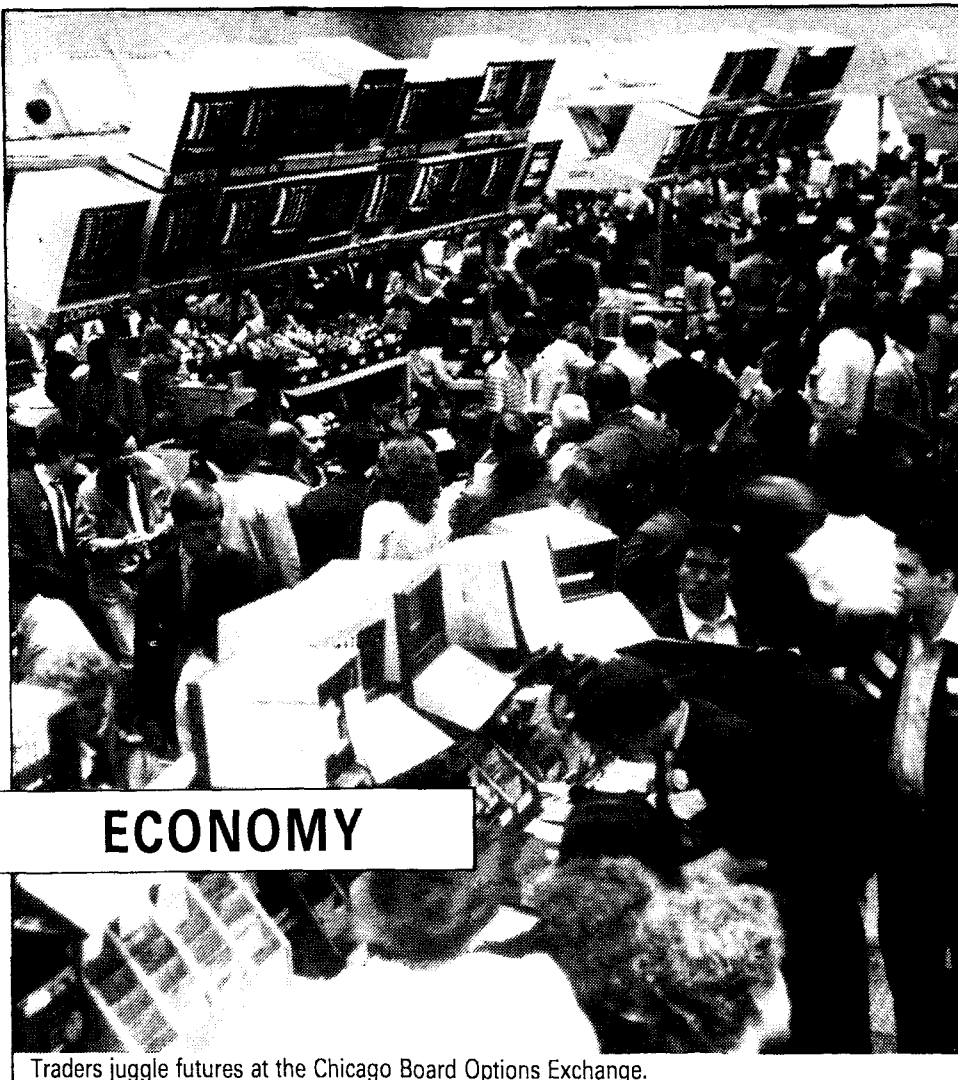
Futures shock: So far U.S. attorney Anton Valukas has brought no indictments, but at least one former trader told reporters the exchanges were "rife with corruption" and "made a mockery of how the system was supposed to work." The investigation apparently started when Archer-Daniels-Midland—a large agribusiness corporation—suspecting traders were shortchanging the company, contacted federal authorities.

If current allegations prove true, most of the corruption seems to have involved traders making prearranged deals to benefit each other at the expense of clients, trading on their own behalf before handling clients' orders or skimming off a portion of each deal for themselves. Many traders are suspected of income tax violations as well.

Other than possibly depriving the government of tax revenue, this alleged corruption immediately amounts mainly to an illegal redistribution of wealth among relatively rich individuals or corporations. After all, between 70 to 90 percent of business done on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange is conducted by institutions—such as corporations, pension funds or mutual funds. There are no indications of scandals like the bad old days of the futures exchanges, when big speculators would corner markets and manipulate prices—or at least try to do so.

For most people the scandal is important only insofar as it affects the stability and functioning of the global financial markets. Increasingly these flamboyant and arcane trading pits, where traders crush against each other in an open auction that they see as the apogee of free-market capitalism, are a vital linchpin in a vastly transformed world economy.

Days of futures past: The largest futures exchange, the Chicago Board of Trade, started in 1848 as Chicago was becoming the agricultural trading center of the expanding frontier. When farmers brought grain to sell, they would often flood the market, depressing prices. Then as stocks ran low, prices would shoot up. The commodity futures exchanges arose as a way for users of agricultural products to protect themselves, or hedge, against wild fluctuations in prices. They would buy or sell promises to deliver a certain quantity of goods at a set price on



ECONOMY

Traders juggle futures at the Chicago Board Options Exchange.

Futures, past and present: corruption as a commodity

a future date, and speculators would gamble that they could at that time deliver the goods and make a profit, presumably by buying them for less at some intervening time.

Over the decades fewer of the trades ever involved any actual possession or delivery of goods. But the speculators provided liquidity—that is, they had money available to buy contracts, hoping they could sell later for a profit. The speculators provided the hedgers with a form of price insurance, and their profits came from normal small differences between the bid and asking prices and from larger fluctuations—which produced both great fortunes and losses (one study showed that over nine years only one-fourth of speculators made a profit). The futures markets also worked to establish commodity prices quickly.

Until 1972 most of the trading involved agricultural goods, since nature's fluctuations created the risks that were the basis for the markets' existence. Then, with the active assistance of Milton Friedman, the University of Chicago free-market conservative, the Chicago Mercantile Exchange opened its International Money Market, which allowed speculators to buy and sell currencies, not tangible commodities. Later the Merc, the Board of Trade and other exchanges offered such exotica as interest-rate futures and stock-index futures. For even more involutioned hedging and speculation, there are options on futures—in which speculators buy the right, not the obligation, to buy futures contracts at some point.

In the past decade the volume of trading on Chicago's futures exchanges has grown 20 to 30 percent annually, and now financial futures and options account for more than three-fourths of all their business. Despite expansion of futures trading around the world, the Chicago exchanges still control

half the world market.

The futures now: With this growth the futures market has taken on a new role of global importance, but the market also reflects a dramatic change in the world economy. Futures markets thrive on uncertainty, fluctuation and risk. "One man's volatility is another man's profit," was reportedly a maxim of former trader-guru Richard Dennis.

The watershed change came in 1971, when President Richard Nixon stopped redeeming dollars in gold, after a run on the U.S. reserves (a development that reflected international uncertainty about inflation and instability in the U.S. triggered by the Vietnam War). As the major industrial nations moved toward floating exchange rates, multinational banks and corporations involved in

Investigation of alleged corruption in Chicago's trading pits further undermines the credibility of the world's increasingly deregulated financial system.

an increasingly globalized economy faced new uncertainties. If a corporation planned to buy a thousand trucks from Germany in six months, for instance, it could no longer be sure how much that would be worth in dollars. Currency futures permitted them to reduce that risk. During the '70s the sources of risk multiplied: price shocks in oil and grain, inflation and rapidly rising interest rates. In the '80s the dollar soared, then plunged, in value.

With improvements in telecommunica-

tions and the advent of computers, the velocity of changes in these interconnected world markets increased. Billions of dollars could be shifted in minutes around the world, from one parking spot to another in search of security, higher returns or simply quick profits from momentary price disparities. With the expansion of the supply of Eurodollars—that is, dollars outside the U.S. banking system—and other financial system changes, the U.S. Federal Reserve Bank had less and less control over interest rates. The problem of interest-rate volatility was also compounded by experiments in Friedman-style monetarism by the Fed and Britain's central bank.

During the '70s large financial institutions emerged as the major investors in the U.S. economy. For example, pension fund holdings of stocks nearly quadrupled from 1975 to 1985, at which point the funds held 22 percent of all outstanding stocks. And trading in large blocks of 10,000 or more shares more than doubled as a percentage of all stock transactions over that time. That indicates the growing importance of institutional investors, who make most such block trades.

The character of investment changed. As a report after the October crash by Wells Fargo, the world's largest institutional equity manager, argued, institutional investors no longer focus on individual stocks based on performance of particular companies but rather on market sectors. In many cases they would much rather buy blocks of, say, Standard & Poor's stock-index futures than buy the stocks themselves. They can make the big-block futures trades more quickly and cheaply, and futures have far lower margin requirements—the amount of cash put up to guarantee performance on a sale.

What caused the crash? There is still a great debate over the role of futures trading in the October crash. A Merc-commissioned study argued the exchanges limited the extent of the plunge; the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) argued futures trading increased velocity of trading and made it harder for the stock exchange to work. Yet finance experts fear that selling on the interrelated stock and futures market could lead to a downward "cascade" of prices, leading to a crash. That was short-circuited in 1987 when the Federal Reserve stepped in to guarantee liquidity—that is, promise money for any strained institutions—and corporations began buying back their own stock.

During the past decade, speculators have been drawn to the possibilities of great profit from the new uncertainties of the world economy. They proliferated new financial products, from different kinds of futures to programmed trading, all to minimize risk for large investors. Wharton School finance professor Edward S. Herman argues that as the markets become more disconnected from underlying economic values, they become "more casino-oriented" and "create their own form of instability."

In response to the current investigation, there are likely to be reforms to reduce potential for corruption. But the big money managers of the world will continue to turn to the futures markets as an escape from instability, even if those markets may at times feed instability. The problem is less with the futures exchanges and more with the world economy. Without greater global coordination in the regulation of world markets, instability will continue and, with the next global economic downturn, become even more serious.

By Dick Russell

BOULDER, COLO.

POLICY EXPERTS WHO GATHERED HERE LAST weekend to discuss the ominous global warming trend revealed that a backlash is escalating in government and industry circles against taking any immediate action. They were equally concerned about President George Bush's recent assertion that only international agreements, not unilateral moves by the U.S., are feasible in planning for climate change. These words come at a time when the rest of the world is looking to the U.S. for leadership.

Many of the more than 50 scientists and environmental leaders, as well as Sen. Timothy Wirth (D-CO) and U.N. representative Noel Brown, urged a standing-room-only audience of over 600 to apply pressure on the new administration. The three-day "Planet in Peril" conference, organized by the University of Colorado Environmental Center, followed close on the heels of a similar large gathering at Stanford University.

But, as the students and others who braved Colorado's sub-zero temperatures to hear about the "greenhouse effect" learned, the obstacles to alleviating it are as high as the stakes. "In asking the developing nations to change their energy policies, we have no moral authority unless we work on getting our own technologies to be less polluting," said Stephen Schneider of the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR).

Maintaining the status quo: Consider the reactions to Sen. Wirth's National Energy Policy Act, reintroduced with 30 co-sponsors in late January to begin dealing with global warming. Among other things, it specifies measures aimed at a 20 percent reduction in fossil fuel carbon dioxide emissions, the major cause of global warming, by the year 2000. Wirth described the frustrations he felt as he discussed the bill with the Chemical Manufacturers Association, American Petroleum Institute and American Chamber of Commerce. "Unfortunately, we're still hearing them all calling for simply more research, maintaining that we don't really know whether the greenhouse effect is a reality," Wirth said.

"A significant backlash is also coming from the timber and coal industries, with very strong constituencies in Congress," the senator continued. "The free-enterprisers are out there, saying we shouldn't be intervening in the marketplace. The right-to-life groups have discovered the issue and organized a major letter-writing campaign against a section on family planning in my bill."

Wirth added that another frontal attack is coming from the mainstream media—playing up new studies purportedly contradicting the data of NASA scientist James Hansen, who stated last summer at a Senate hearing that "the greenhouse effect has been detected and is changing our climate now" (see *In These Times*, Jan. 25). The way Wirth sees it, "Some in the scientific community, resenting all the publicity given other experts like Hansen and Stephen Schneider, are now saying that global warming doesn't exist. We saw this last week on page one of the *New York Times*, with a group of scientists proclaiming that the U.S. has shown no significant temperature rise. Well, for one thing, the U.S. covers only 2 percent of the surface of the world. That's like going to Chicago and saying there's no evidence here of the ozone hole over Antarctica, so it's nothing to worry about. But these kinds of stories will get a lot of attention."

ENVIRONMENT



Chief Oren Lyons of the Iroquois Nation asks, "Why are you not furious that somebody is threatening your seventh generation?"

Hothouse politics of greenhouse effect

The U.S. is responsible for the largest share—an estimated 26 percent—of global CO₂ emissions. Over the past 10 years America's contribution to the problem has remained about the same due to improvements in energy efficiency. But, as World Resources Institute climate expert Mark Trexler stated, "Developing countries are now poised for an explosion of CO₂ emissions in the coming years. Asking them to set limits means they would forego the opportunity to use the oil and coal on which we based our Industrial Revolution and amassing of societal wealth. We don't yet have much precedent for making such a demand. As opposed to lengthy negotiations and a lot of name-calling, we have to start addressing this domestically."

Numerous conference speakers noted that heavily industrialized U.S., USSR and Western Europe bear the overwhelming responsibility for the looming global warming crisis. But the eventual impacts of agricultural drought and sea level rise will probably be far more severe in less-developed nations, whose population are soaring and that have fewer resources to adapt to predicted changes: for example, more drought in Africa, more flooding in India. "This great inequity," predicted Peter Gleick, environmental director of Berkeley's Pacific Institute, "will be the source of tremendous political friction in the future. The risks and characteristics of global climate change are going to greatly complicate negotiations between nations."

Developing nations were suspicious, long before the greenhouse dilemma, of the West's call for them to adopt "limited growth" policies. Today the continued decline of commodity prices, rising protectionism and increasing debt burdens are forcing developing countries to exploit marginal lands and resources, including the imperiled tropical rain forests. One solution, proposed by Noel Brown, North America's director of the United Nations Environment Program, would be to trade the debt in exchange for massive reforestation programs.

The destruction of forests worldwide, besides driving thousands of plant and animal

species to extinction, is vastly accelerating the amount of CO₂ and methane, another greenhouse gas, entering the atmosphere. Last month Wirth arranged for a congressional delegation to spend a week in the Brazilian rain forest. He also came armed with a proposal to alleviate the nation's foreign debt in a swap for rain forest protection. While Brazil's National Security Council, concerned about the drug traffic and other foreign incursions, balked at the idea, a positive response from the Foreign Ministry now seems to have swayed President José Sarney. Wirth is following up with negotiations through the World Bank, Brazil's primary international lender.

A novel idea: Other hopeful signs are coming from the Soviet Union, which is plagued by a host of environmental woes. According to NCAR's Schneider, who was present at an environmental conference last autumn convened by *Time* magazine, a Soviet delegate in attendance raised the need for "advanced Western technology to help us fight pollution." When Sen. Albert Gore Jr. (D-TN) countered that such a technology transfer might be possible in exchange for a Soviet pullout of troops from Eastern Europe, the Soviet delegate reportedly responded, "That's a very good and feasible idea."

Such events led Brown to speculate that the world has reached "an open moment in history, where a new ecological alliance in the service of the Earth is possible. Ecological conflict must be put into balance as we redefine security not just in military terms. But is society willing to invest in these long-term problems?"

Massive investment is needed to tackle these problems. The precedent for such huge outlays is the \$10 trillion each spent by the U.S. and the Soviets, during the four-decade long Cold War. Along similar lines, energy efficiency pioneer Amory Lovins compared U.S. military expenditures to maintain access to Arab oil supplies, summarizing, "We spend \$50 billion a year in the Persian Gulf, equivalent to oil selling for \$50 a barrel. If we took

one year to make our buildings more heat-tight, we wouldn't need to import oil from the Gulf anymore—and we'd be alleviating the greenhouse effect as well."

Like Brown, Brooks Yeager, legislative director of the National Audubon Society, was optimistic that the reality of global environmental problems "can in some ways be used as a tool. The necessity of working together may overwhelm petty disputes that have been going on for the last 40 years."

Perhaps, but whether the "open moment" can be seized remains very much an open question. Brown admitted that the United Nations has so far proved weak in pushing for international action on global warming. But he raised the possibility of using the U.N.'s Genocide Convention to agitate for more rapid changes. "When you look at what we are doing to future generations, are we not committing, if not genocide, then ecocide? We need a new value base. Yet the prevailing legal procedures and norms make this impossible."

Start making sense: In the U.S., the initial tests of the Bush administration's and Congress' commitment on the greenhouse issue will come soon. How strong will the scheduled reauthorization of the Clean Air Act be? Where will the politicians stand on timber-cutting in the Tongass National Forest and opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil drilling? "If this administration again rolls back the auto efficiency standards from 28 miles per gallon to 26.5, over 40 years that will come close to consuming all the oil that's projected could be found in the wildlife refuge," said Wirth.

Then there is the matter of nuclear power, being pushed as a solution to global warming by the Department of Energy (DOE) and powerful legislators like Bennett Johnston (R-LA), chairman of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. Even Wirth included funding for research into "inherently safe" nuclear reactors in his omnibus legislation, in large part, Schneider told *In These Times*, because the senator would otherwise

Continued on page 10

By Diana Johnstone

PARIS

THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION IS REPORTEDLY all set to play "contra" in a place where it won't have to worry about opposition from the American public: Libya. Instead of arming Latino mercenaries to harass Nicaragua from bases in Honduras, the new game is to arm Africans from bases in Chad to harass Libya and eventually overthrow Muammar Khadafy.

The U.S. and Israel have set up a series of bases in Chad and other neighboring countries to train Libyan "contras," according to *Africa Confidential*, a newsletter published in London and Paris. Officers of the anti-Khadafy force are being trained by the presidential guards of several African chiefs of state whose spendthrift rule has in the past been denounced by the Libyan leader. Libyan "contras" are being trained by Israeli or U.S. personnel at several bases in Cameroon, thanks to the particularly strong Israeli presence in that country, the newsletter said. Cameroon serves as a useful intermediary between Israeli and Saudi secret services, the newsletter added, with Israel providing technical assistance and Saudi Arabia helping to finance the anti-Khadafy operation.

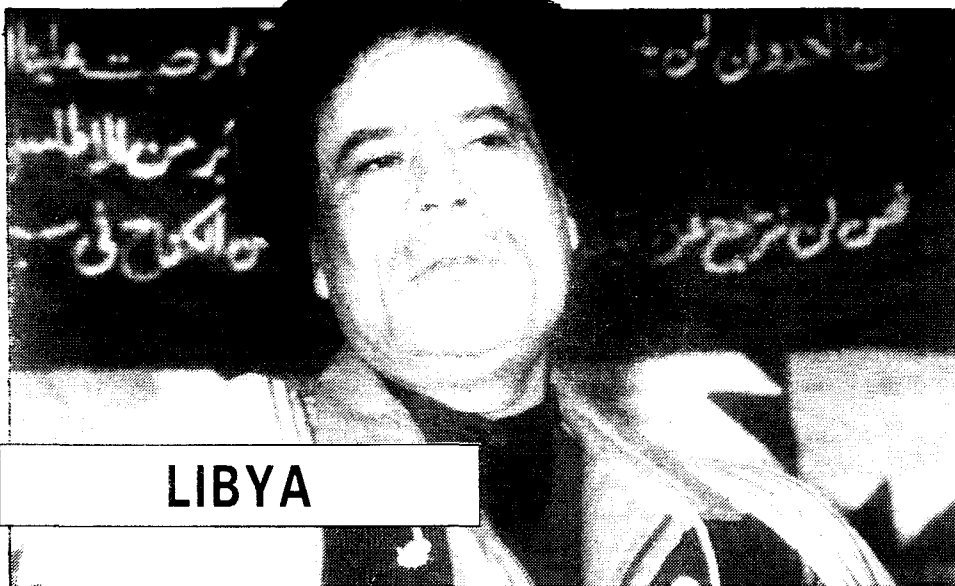
CIAography: The new U.S. deputy national security adviser, Robert M. Gates, suggested back in 1985, when he was head of CIA intelligence analysis, that a U.S.-Egyptian operation against Libya would present an opportunity to "redraw the map of North Africa." The White House bought the idea, but it was vetoed by the State Department in the summer of 1985, according to a February 1987 *Washington Post* report by Bob Woodward and Don Oberdorfer.

The big hitch in Gates' 1985 project for rearranging North Africa seems to have been the strains it would have put on Egypt, whose part in the scenario included capturing about half of Libya's vast territory.

But the surprise 1987 rout of Libyan-trained forces in Chad has provided a more discreet and expendable force to use against Muammar Khadafy: a "contra" army made up of regional recruits. The core of the new force was provided by some 2,000 Libyan prisoners captured by Chad's U.S.-backed forces in the 1987 conflict along with millions of dollars worth of military equipment. The captured force has been transformed into the National Front for the Salvation of Libya (NFSL).

The day after Christmas the top military leader of the NFSL, Col. Abdoulgassim Khalifa Haftar, reported to the new U.S. ambassador to Chad, Robert Lee Pugh, at the diplomat's residence in N'Djamena. Haftar and his colleague Dr. Abou Oumar delivered a "voluminous report" on their activities to the U.S. ambassador, according to the Paris newsletter *La Lettre du Continent*.

The down and out of Africa: Since the Chad disaster Khadafy has apparently abandoned his dream of supporting African liberation movements against regimes he considered neocolonialist. Sub-Saharan Africa is in such a disastrous state that the continent is being abandoned not only by Khadafy and the Soviet Union, but by many of the European "neocolonialists," who are moving their investments to places with better infrastructures. The opportunity is excellent for those powers whose immediate interest is geopolitical rather than economic—South Africa, but also the U.S. and Israel—to reshape



LIBYA

Muammar Khadafy will have his hands full as the CIA sends his Chadians home to roost.

Khadafy regime being set up for a contra-style Bushwhacking

Africa in the midst of an obscure chaos. As Mozambique has shown, it is not hard in the prevailing misery to recruit African soldiers for destructive contra-type operations. In recent years "low-intensity war" has been one of Africa's few growth industries. Of course, the intensity is not low for those close up, but most of the world is far away and indifferent.

Anti-Khadafy soldiers are being sought in various "pro-Western" African countries. A recruiting office for NFSL mercenaries has been opened in Zaire's capital of Kinshasa. About three dozen anti-Khadafy Libyans are being trained by Gabonese head of state Omar Bongo's presidential guard in Wonga Wong, while anti-Khadafy Libyan pilots are being trained at an Israeli base in the Central African Republic, *Africa Confidential* reports.

Africa Confidential also says the whole anti-Libyan operation is being run out of a N'Djamena safe house belonging to the Chadian secret police, the Direction of Documentation and Security (DDS).

Chad's current strongman president, Hissen Habré, seems to have switched from the French intelligence services to the CIA in the course of his adventurous rise to power in the former French colony, whose desert, nomadic, Islamic northern region and sedentary, agricultural south have never really merged. Fighting Libya can provide a national purpose and source of revenue for this extremely poor country.

Since Chad was granted formal independence in 1960, France has paid the salaries of its top officials and sent forces from time to time against recurring rebellions and liberation movements. While the French still train the regular army, the Americans and Israelis have taken over the special operations units and the crucial presidential guard. *Africa Confidential* reports that some 1,200 members of the Chad presidential security force have been trained by Israeli instructors at the secret American base in Kamina in southern Zaire—also a transit point for U.S. provisions to Jonas Savimbi's "contra" war in Angola.

All through his presidency France's François Mitterrand has resisted U.S. pressure to use Chad as a platform to wage "low-intensity warfare" against Libya. While France helped Habré against Libyan-backed rebels within

Chad itself, Mitterrand considered the matter closed once Libyan troops were out of Chad. France has not been willing to back a Chadian war to recover the disputed desert border area called the Aouzou Strip—a difficult legal dispute which could quite possibly be settled by the international court at The Hague.

To secret-war enthusiasts in the Pentagon the Aouzou dispute must seem, on the contrary, a splendid opportunity to practice special operations skills in a remote, inaccessible—and thus politically invisible—region against a leader the U.S. has chosen as pet enemy.

The Muammar we love to hate: Since the very violent combat in the summer of 1987, Khadafy has been trying to mend relations with Chad. Libya has improved its relations with all its neighbors as well as with Europe. Domestic conditions, both political and economic, have also improved. There is less reason than ever for Libyans or Libya's neighbors to wage war against the country's leadership. Khadafy has recently stressed his

The CIA and the Israelis are quietly but busily at work in a remote corner of Africa with the aim of kicking the Chad out from under Muammar Khadafy.

desire to normalize relations with the Bush administration. But eight years of media propaganda have convinced Americans that the Libyan leader is a sort of mastermind of international terrorism who should be destroyed.

Regional observers believe that insofar as there may be truth in U.S. allegations that Libya is making chemical weapons (CW), the real target of such weapons would be the U.S.-backed invaders from Chad. If so, Libya would almost certainly drop the chemical weapons if the U.S. agreed to drop the NFSL.

Ostensibly, U.S. concern at a potential Libyan chemical weapons capacity stems from the danger of Libyan attack against Israel.

This threat was dramatized in William Safire's notorious *New York Times* column attacking German chemical exports to Libya as contributing to an "Auschwitz-in-the-sands." Libyan chemical weapons were portrayed as the instrument of a new holocaust against Jews in Israel.

Specialists do not take the Libyan threat to Israel seriously. They point out that Libya is far from Israel and that manufacture and use of delivery systems for long-range CW attack require a level of technical mastery the Libyans do not possess. A mass extermination CW attack such as suggested by Safire is pure fantasy—which overlooks the fact that it would not be possible to "exterminate" the Jews of Tel Aviv without killing Palestinian Arab inhabitants at the same time.

Syria, on the other hand, might be able to use chemical weapons against Israel. However, not only is Israel ready to retaliate but its soldiers are particularly well-equipped to defend themselves. The Israeli military has even developed masks and protective clothing that can be worn in hot climates without immobilizing their users.

More "good lessons" to come? There is a perfect antidote for nerve gas which can be self-administered by exposed soldiers within 10 or 15 minutes of exposure. During their Chad campaign French troops were very much afraid the Libyans would use mustard gas against them since they were without anti-CW defenses for the hot climate. Their alarm rose when some of the captured Libyan soldiers turned out to be equipped defensively for CW warfare.

The Libyans did not use chemical weapons against the French in Chad, but they are reported to have sprayed mustard gas on Chadian soldiers who invaded Libya after defeating the Libyan force that had first entered Chad to support Habré's rival for the presidency, Goukouni Oueddeye.

Past experience shows that, since the indecisive use of mustard gas between equal adversaries on the World War I battlefields, chemical weapons have been used only against an adversary with inferior technology.

Some of this experience was acquired in Libya itself. In 1930 fascist Italy undertook the "reconquest" of Cyrenaica, the eastern part of Libya that it had never fully subjugated after it took over the territory as a colony from the departing Ottoman Empire. The Bedouin inhabitants, proud and pious, resisted the Italian takeover under the leadership of an incorruptible elder, Omar al Mukhtar. On Jan. 10, 1930, the Italian commander, Marshal Pietro Badoglio, sent orders to give Omar al Mukhtar a "good surprise with aviation and mustard gas bombs." Chemical weapons were thereupon used in the successful genocidal attack on Khadafy's ancestors in order to clear out the region for Italian settlers.

That Italian use of poison gas went totally unnoticed at the time and was not publicly documented in Italy until 1978. Libya is still remote, and Chad is perhaps even more closed to outside observers than it was half a century ago. Nobody in the West will know for sure what goes on there. The media will report what it is told by "Western intelligence sources"—meaning the CIA, which, if the confidential newsletter information gathered from French and African sources is correct, is itself a party to future conflict in the region. □

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Greenhouse

Continued from page 8

have no hope of getting the bill out of the committee.

So far the DOE has committed scant resources to anything but the nuclear front. Of its \$15 billion annual budget, about \$1 billion is for energy development and policy, and \$2 billion for scientific studies mainly related to nuclear power. The remainder supports the U.S. nuclear arsenal and pollution-plagued civilian "bomb factories" like Savannah River, S.C. "Until we get the bombs out of DOE," said Lovins, "we'll never be able to get them to focus on the climate-related problems."

On the other side of Congress, a sweeping Global Climate Prevention Act reintroduced recently by Rep. Claudine Schneider (R-RI) has already been referred to 11 different committees. All such legislation, Wirth conceded, including his own, is likely to face strong resistance. So, toward the conclusion of the Colorado conference, Randy Hayes of the Rainforest Action Network issued a different call to action. "It's clear we cannot leave this problem in the hands of government and the corporations, but must create a new political climate. Without a mass grass-roots movement, we are doomed in this situation."

Or, as Chief Oren Lyons of the Iroquois Nation told the student gathering in a keynote speech beseeching them to consider the effects of today's actions many years hence, "The basis of my peoples' government is responsibility and accountability to the future seventh generation. Why are you not furious that somebody is threatening your seventh generation?"

Here's who is on top of the global warming trend

A number of private environmental groups, several Congress members, government agencies and international organizations have been preparing scientific reports, issuing policy statements and proposing solutions for governments and individuals to begin doing something about the greenhouse effect. Following is a list of some of the major ones, what they do and how to get in touch with them.

• **WORLDWATCH INSTITUTE.** Publishers of an excellent bimonthly magazine *World Watch* (printed on recycled paper, \$15 annual subscription), this environmental think tank also issues a regular series of *Worldwatch Papers* and an annual *State of the World* report. Recent greenhouse-related reports, available for \$4.00 each, have focused on renewable energy (#81), energy efficiency (#82), reforesting the Earth (#83), rethinking the role of the automobile (#84) and the changing world food prospect (#85). President is Lester Brown. Write: Worldwatch Institute, 1776 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20036.

• **ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE FUND.** This New York-headquartered environmental group maintains offices in five other states. Months before global warming became front page news, EDF co-sponsored international forums on the greenhouse effect in Austria and Italy. In 1988 it negotiated an agreement with the fast-food packaging industry to cease using the most harmful CFCs. Atmosphere specialists are physicist Michael Oppenheimer and economist Dan Dudek.

Write: Environmental Defense Fund, 257 Park Ave. South, New York, NY 10010, for membership information.

• **WORLD RESOURCES INSTITUTE.** A policy research center founded in 1982, this organization has developed a 56-country plan for halting the rapid destruction of tropical forests and currently is devising a global energy strategy. It has also published numerous reports, including 1987's "A Matter of Degrees: The Potential for Cooling the Greenhouse Effect" (\$12, includes postage and handling). Atmosphere specialists are Irving Mintzer, William Moomaw and Rafe Pomerance. Write: World Resources Institute, 1709 New York Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20006.

• **NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL.** An environmental group headquartered in New York, NRDC publishes an award-winning quarterly magazine, the *Amicus Journal*. Its legal staff has sued the Environmental Protection Agency to force stronger action on both the ozone layer and greenhouse fronts. In fact, the NRDC is committing 20 attorneys and scientists to a new "atmospheric protection initiative." The NRDC and Soviet Academy of Sciences recently signed an agreement to work together on energy conservation efforts in the USSR. Washington atmospheric specialists are David Wirth and David Doniger. Annual membership of \$10 includes magazine and bimonthly newsletter. Write: Natural Resources Defense Council, 122 East 42nd St., New York, NY 10168.

• **GLOBAL GREENHOUSE NETWORK.** A new organization designed to help facilitate international cooperation on the greenhouse crisis, its first conference last October brought together more than 200 grass-root activists from 35 nations. The network is now planning a Global Earth Day on every continent in 1990. Founded by Jeremy Rifkin, a well-known opponent of biotechnology, the network's information kit contains numerous recommendations for curtailing global warming. Write: The Foundation on Economic Trends, 1130 Seventh St. NW (Room 630), Washington, DC 20036.

• **ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION.** This organization does lobbying, research and citizen organizing around several aspects of the global warming problem. It has also established an Energy Conservation Coalition, bringing together 20 national groups. Write: Environmental Action, 1525 New Hampshire Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20036.

• **RENEW AMERICA.** Its recent report, available for \$7, focuses on state programs to avert global warming. Write: Renew America, 1001 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite 719, Washington, DC 20036.

• **EARTH ISLAND INSTITUTE.** Environmental group founded by David Brower, its quarterly *Earth Island Journal* is an outstanding compendium of ecological news from around the world. It maintains a Climate Protection Network. Vol. 3, No. 3 of the *Journal* featured a special section, "Global Warming and Reforestation." Annual membership: \$25. Write: Earth Island Institute, 300 Broadway, Suite 28, San Francisco, CA 94133.

• **WOODS HOLE RESEARCH CENTER.** Based in Massachusetts, this private, non-profit organization focuses primarily on the greenhouse crisis. Besides preparing studies on the problem, it will convene a major international conference in New Delhi on Feb. 21-23 about how developing nations can make needed energy and policy changes. Director is George Woodwell. Write to: Woods Hole Research Center, P.O. Box 296, Woods Hole, MA 02543.

• **ROCKY MOUNTAIN INSTITUTE.** Established by Amory and Hunter Lovins, this Colorado-based resource policy institute focuses

on the sustainable use of resources, primarily through efficiency, as a pathway to global security. Write: Rocky Mountain Institute, 1739 Snowmass Creek Rd., Snowmass, CO 81654.

• **AMERICAN COUNCIL FOR AN ENERGY EFFICIENT ECONOMY.** This non-profit research group conducts research and development on efficiency technologies, policy research and advocacy. Director is Howard Geller. Write: ACEEE, 1001 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite 535, Washington, DC 20013.

• **AMERICAN FORESTRY ASSOCIATION.** It has initiated a national campaign to assist Americans in planting 100 million trees by 1992. Write: Global ReLeaf Program, P.O. Box 2000, Washington, DC 20013.

• **RAINFOREST ACTION NETWORK.** This is the most active environmental group devoted exclusively to saving tropical forests. Publishes a monthly newsletter and the quarterly, *World Rainforest Report*. Director is Randall Hayes. Write: Rainforest Action Network, 300 Broadway (Suite 28), San Francisco, CA 94133.

• **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY.** The EPA has published two recent studies: "Greenhouse Effect: Sea Level Rise and Coastal Wetlands" (July 1988) and is working on a draft of "The Potential Effects of Global Climate Change on the United States" (October 1988). A policy report will be released later this winter. EPA climate change coordinator is Dennis Tirpak. Write: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Policy, Planning and Evaluation, Washington, DC 20460.

• **NASA GODDARD INSTITUTE FOR SPACE STUDIES.** Directed by James Hansen, the institute specializes in climate studies for the federal government. Write: NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies, 2880 Broadway, New York, NY 10025.

• **NATIONAL CENTER FOR ATMOSPHERIC RESEARCH.** Based in Colorado, the center conducts studies on the implications of climate change. Leading spokesperson is Stephen Schneider. Write: National Center for Atmospheric Research, P.O. Box 3000, Boulder, CO 80307.

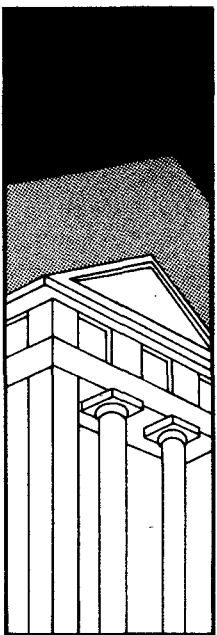
• **U.S. CONGRESS.** Three comprehensive bills to help in alleviating the greenhouse effect were introduced in the last session of Congress: The National Energy Policy Act of 1988, by Sen. Timothy Wirth (D-CO), U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510; The Global Environmental Protection Act of 1988, by Sen. Robert Stafford (R-VT), was reintroduced February 1 by Sens. James Jeffords (R-VT) and Patrick Leahy (D-VT) as a tribute to Sen. Stafford, who recently retired, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510; and the Global Warming Prevention Act, by Rep. Claudine Schneider (R-RI), will be reintroduced February 21, 1512 Longworth Building, Washington, DC 20515.

• **UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM.** With the Montreal Protocol treaty on protecting the ozone layer under its auspices, the organization recently called for a similar international agreement on global warming. Director is Mustafa Tolba. Write: United Nations Environment Program, P.O. Box 47074, Nairobi, Kenya. (There is a U.S. office at U.N. headquarters in New York.)

• **WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ASSOCIATION.** Its World Climate Program is working on both science and policy issues. Its latest report is "Developing Policies for Responding to Climate Change." Write: World Meteorological Organization, Case Postale No. 5, CH-1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland.

Dick Russell covers the environment regularly for *In These Times*.

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THE LEFT IN ITALY? IF YOU CAN FIND IT, LET me know." "The left is dead. Long live the left." The comments one is likely to hear in Italy today are all the more telling because they usually come from leftists themselves. They speak of the uneasiness, frustration and disenchantment that has slowly grown inside the traditional left.

In the '80s, two closely related factors have contributed to the steady erosion of the gains that Italian progressives made in the '60s and tried, unsuccessfully, to consolidate in the '70s: a general shift to the right, and the victory of capital over labor.

In elections over the last decade the Italian Communist Party (PCI) has dropped steadily from a peak 34.4 percent of the vote in 1976 to 27 percent in the 1987 administrative elections.

By contrast, the ruling Christian Democrats (DC) are on the upswing again, gaining 33 percent of the vote in '87. The DC hold the largely ceremonial presidency as well as the offices of the prime minister and foreign minister. They have commanded the reins of power in Italy for more than 40 years.

Their main ruling coalition ally, the Socialist Party (PSI), has also grown in the last decade, from 9.6 percent to 14 percent. Many believe it may eventually supplant the Communists as the country's second-largest political force.

These trends were accentuated in administrative elections last June, involving a fourth of the electorate. In some cities the Socialists actually beat the Communists, who lost everywhere, even in their traditional north-central strongholds. The Christian Democrats gained slightly across the board.

Results differed from region to region, but overall the warning was clear: if the tide is not reversed, the PCI, the largest communist party in the Western world, will go the way of the French Communists, leaving the Socialists to contend for power in a country with only two major political blocs.

So where does the left fit in? And do the Socialists and Communists really represent Italian progressive forces?

The PCI, along with the General Confederation of Italian Labor (CGIL), its affiliated union federation, is internally split and disoriented by the quickening pace of social change. It clings to outdated strategies for dealing with new problems. Hesitation, indecision and, at times, total paralysis have resulted. The CGIL, caught between capitalist "restructuring" and criticism from environmentalists, is struggling to keep up with production innovations. It is searching for effective responses to industrial renovation and modernization, layoffs and management's increasing combativeness. Other posers for labor include the relationship between environmental protection and job security; the looming decentralized international market that will come with Common Market integration in 1992; new technologies; and organizational changes in the workplace, like the spread of "quality circles."

Ranks filing out: Vincenzo Barbato, member of the PCI central committee and a blue-collar worker at Alfa Romeo, believes that "a wave of free-market ideology is sweeping the rank and file. The belief that the working class itself may disappear is growing." FIAT, Italy's largest private industrial group, bought ailing Alfa Romeo from the state in 1987 and immediately laid off union leaders and PCI activists with the ex-

The left is drifting rightward

cuse of having to reduce the labor force or shut down several plants. Ten years ago FIAT wouldn't have gotten away with it. "This time," Barbato said, "the party didn't realize what was going on. It didn't understand that restructuring is being used to strike against the workers and the Communists."

Many believe the PCI is also losing ground because it joined the general ideological rush to the center, trying to woo moderate voters with its "new" social democratic

ITALY

image. The result has been that it has narrowed the grounds for conflict with public opinion, but without offering attractive alternatives or obtaining a wider consensus. One comment popular in Italy today is that the party should give in and change its name, eliminating the word "Communist."

Renzo Foa, vice editor of *l'Unità*, the PCI organ, recently said: "The difficult part is showing every day which side the Communists are on. In the last 10 years we have been part of the government coalition without being able to prove we could govern. Then we went back to the opposition, but we have not been able to prove we can do that either."

Two different "souls" are struggling for dominance inside the Communist Party, though this is denied by most party officials. The right wing is hard to distinguish from the more conservative elements of other European social democratic parties. The left wing consists of the more radical and progressive segment of the PCI.

The result is inconsistency. The PCI officially recognizes Italian NATO membership as a "necessary and correct" foreign policy. In June it supported a bill limiting the right to strike in so-called "essential public services" (the right to strike is guaranteed by the Italian constitution). And it has not resisted social spending cuts and tax breaks for the rich.

On the other hand, the PCI has fought against sending the Italian fleet to the Persian Gulf, and it has supported legislation recognizing rape as a crime against the individual (previously labeled "against morality"). The PCI has also opposed monopoly (Italy is the only Western country without antitrust laws) and corruption in public ad-

ministration. Usually, though, its actions come late and without apparent conviction or strength.

Boutique politics: This has helped the Socialists, the tiny Radical Party and the new Green Party to take votes away from the Communists. The ascent of the media as political opinion-makers is a recent phenomenon in Italy, but here, too, politics is becoming a mass market in which different groups compete for selected target populations. The many small parties, like leftist Proletarian Democracy, have their segments of the electoral market all staked out.

The Socialists now claim to be "the left" in Italy. They play "on all fronts"—*a tutto campo*, to use their own soccer-military term—reaching out to both right and left.

Because they have adapted well to the new winds of consumerism, free-market propaganda, anti-labor and anti-welfare ideology, they have been duly rewarded. In this game, the PSI has gathered support across class lines, embracing those who believe in Italy's "growing up" (the PSI's campaign slogan) and in the increasingly popular image of the nation as a modern, rich, efficient Western power.

To call PSI policies social democratic—as compared to the centrist programs of its Spanish and French sister parties—is inaccurate. In fact, as members of the five-party ruling coalition, the Socialists have spearheaded the general swing to the right.

They promoted the 1987 referendum restricting funds for nuclear power plant construction—adding that nuclear energy is not to be ruled out in "safe" plants. The PSI has criticized Israeli policies in the Occupied Territories, but with an eye to the coming elections. They know that there is no chance of anyone taking seriously PSI Secretary Bettino Craxi's proposal for an international peacekeeping force under the aegis of the European Community. The PSI has also

Italians are trading in the old mass left for 'boutique politics' as the once mighty Communists fade.

backed the transfer to Italy of the 72 NATO F-16 fighter jets recently expelled from Spain.

On the economic front, Socialist Treasury Minister Giuliano Amato has concocted a series of austerity measures that have penalized mainly the working classes, leaving untouched—and untaxed—tax evaders, recipients of capital gains and the wealthy in general. (Tax evasion, the great Italian game, is estimated to equal the public deficit of more than \$770 billion.) The PSI has led the march in favor of free-market policies, against the right to strike and against labor unions in general.

Obviously, Socialists and Communists—both claiming to best represent the Italian left—are having difficulty finding some common ground beyond their historical roots. Even Giorgio Napolitano, perhaps the most conservative of the PCI central committee officials, recently said, "If the PSI had not gained [votes], it would be hard to imagine agreement or even the outlining of common action between the two parties." Both are talking about possible collaboration, but this is generally viewed as an opportunistic move by the Socialists to win votes, and a desperate attempt by the Communists to reverse their decline.

Meanwhile, the Christian Democrats have successfully played both sides against each other. The DC has formed close to 100 city council coalitions with the Communists, excluding the Socialists. This has infuriated Craxi, who has threatened to pull out of the government "if future city coalitions do not reflect the national government makeup."

Achille's heel: The DC has no intention of allowing the Communists to join the government, but it is successfully playing this game to encourage further divisions within the left.

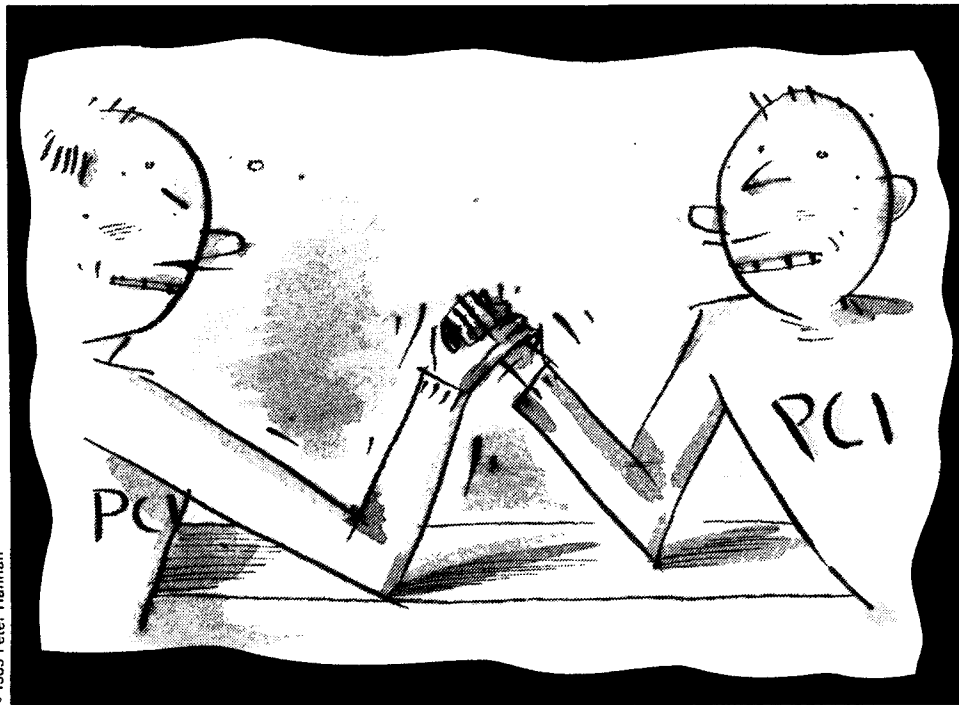
So, Italy is heading for this year's European Parliament elections with a fragmented and retreating left. Students, once a seemingly inexhaustible supply of progressive energy, have rediscovered individualism, conformist values and the joys of consumerism.

In this new atmosphere, the Communists seem paralyzed by fear and uncertainty. At recent central committee meetings, newly elected Secretary Achille Occhetto has played for time, strengthening the impression that the party leadership has lost its bearings. By confirming his support of the PCI's left, and by telling the right that he "understands" its concerns, Occhetto is fence-sitting in the interest of party unity.

His predecessor, Alessandro Natta, spent his four years as secretary doing just that. Voters responded by punishing his bland, uncommitted leadership.

In coming elections the Greens will probably continue to grow, as will the Socialists, both at the expense of the Communists. Political trends in Italy often follow those in other Western countries, especially the U.S. The U.S. presidential elections were a weather vane for future possibilities here. Time is running short for a weakened Communist Party and a fragmented left as they grope for ways to counteract a cultural, political and economic wave that is gathering strength and speed. □

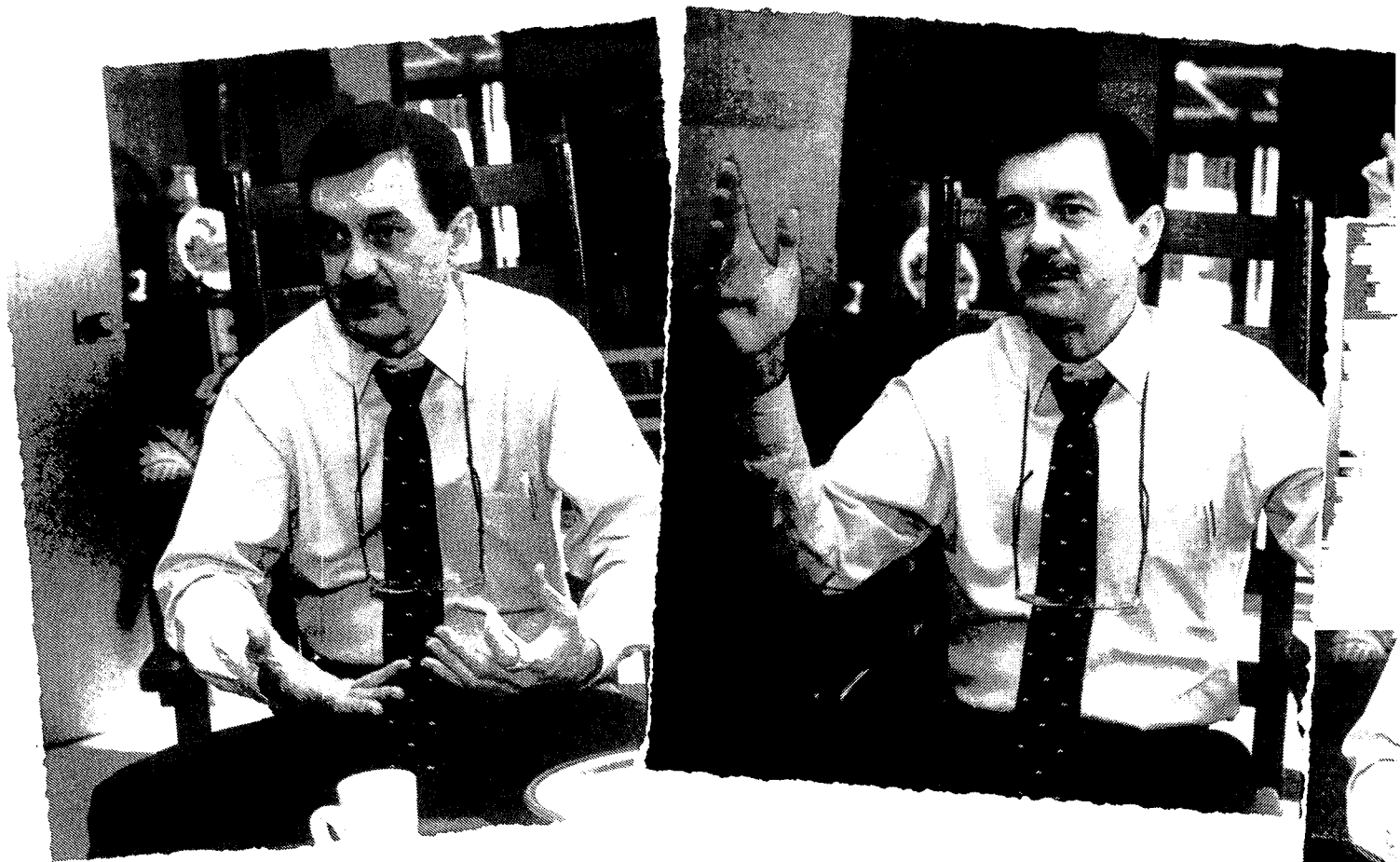
Stefano Petrucci writes for ANSA, Italy's main wire service, as well as the Rome daily *Il Manifesto*.



c 1989 Peter Hannan

The post-Reagan era finds both the Democratic Party and the American left adrift. The national party's strategy of wooing "Reagan Democrats" in preference to its traditional base has failed badly for the second straight presidential election, while for its part the left has failed to develop a coherent program or to build its own infrastructure. For the past 20 years or more, while the right pursued hard to create national presence and organization, the left has done little or nothing. The left has been too busy fighting the Reagan Revolution, too busy fighting the Reagan Revolution, too busy fighting the Reagan Revolution.

The left has not the will or the vision to challenge the dominance of the Democratic Party, and that the party's future is on the left. Over the next several months we will open our pages to discussion of the prospects for creating an effective left presence within the Democratic Party. The first of these pieces is an interview with Texas Agriculture Commissioner Jim Hightower.



TALKIN' TEXANS

On January 6, Texas Agriculture Commissioner Jim Hightower announced in Austin that he would not challenge Republican Sen. Phil Gramm in 1990, but would instead seek re-election to the state department of agriculture. Texas Observer editor Dave Denison met with Hightower that day to discuss the commissioner's political motivations and plans. What follows is an edited version of the interview.

Jim Hightower interviewed by Dave Denison

What's behind your decision to get out of the Senate race?

It definitely is something I want to do. My whole political experience has been wrapped up in populism, which is a history of titanic clashes and great orators and campaigners like Mary Lease and Sockless Jerry Simpson. And then on into the Democratic remnants of that populist movement and having worked for Ralph Yarborough. I had always envisioned myself as being engaged in the kind of campaign where people get in fights in supermarkets over who you're supporting. And here it was. Phil Gramm head-to-head with me was going to be one of those kind of things—good vs. evil and handsome vs. ugly.

But all along there was something kind of nagging at me, and finally, as I did some campaigning in this presidential election, it got down to the fact that it was going to be a humongous enterprise that was not going to build the populist-progressive political base in Texas and across the country.

We are not in the debate in the Texas legislature. What populists do when the legislature convenes is to look at the budget that [Gov. Bill] Clements, [Lt. Gov. Bill] Hobby and [House Speaker Gibson] Lewis put forward,

and then get defensive about or supportive of, some dollar figures here or there.

Why haven't we ever put forward our own budget? Here's what you ought to cut out of higher education, and here's what you ought to put into it. Here's big savings over here that's a boondoggle to an industry that doesn't need it, let's apply that to something else.

We're not in the political game, even as the Democratic Party, much less as a progressive movement. Sure, we get behind occasional candidates and we have some people with election skills, but not the kind of systematic, day in and day out effort that on a cynical manipulative level the Republican Party is engaged in.

I mean going out there with a message, a vision and some sense of program. Not issue papers, but some sense of what we would do about problems that are touching the hearts and minds of people who only occasionally vote, or vote in disgust, or don't vote at all, which is the vast majority of Texans. I think you're talking two-thirds of the potential electorate right there.

We need a program to get that message out. Speakers bureaus, getting on cable television, working the system of radio talk shows, letter-to-the-editor writing, op-ed pieces.

We have no systematic effort to do even that. But putting that message out so that some of those voters who are disgusted and disaffected might hear something that they're not generally hearing and say, hey, that's a tune I remember, where's that been? So that then we can also go about the business of recruiting and supporting good candidates. Have a direct mail solicitation program that's able to put some money in it, have a financial network of our wealthy givers that are willing to receive aspirants for office and consider investing in them.

The Republican Party, in last year's election in Texas, put \$750,000 into legislative races. I doubt we put any as Democrats. O.K., they're richer than we are. But we're not without resources. I mean, we ought to be able to do \$300,000 to put into legislative races. And if

we don't, then we're in danger in 1990 of weakening our position in a legislature that's going to reapportion legislative and congressional districts for the long haul.

We have to get serious about the business of building our political base. As progressives and Democrats we have been rather complacent and willing to accept the political system as it is.

The political system has become more hostile, when you look at the cost of campaigning. And I wonder if this is a factor in your decision about Gramm. Former Rep. Michael Barnes told Philip Stern in the book *The Best Congress Money Can Buy* that consultants had warned him before he made his [Senate] race that he'd have to spend 80 to 90 percent of his time raising money.

I start with high name recognition, a network of organized supporters who are out there. But even for me, I am certainly going to have to spend half of my time in fund raising, personally by me.

Think about that idea. To be considered as a possible candidate for the U.S. Senate, one of the highest offices in our land, the big question is: can you raise \$10 million? Which immediately eliminates 95 percent of politicians, much less 99 percent of the American people.

We may as well do away with the 17th Amendment—direct senatorial election—because it is effectively done away with when that is the entry fee for serving in the Senate. If you cannot even be in the game without \$10 million, then you don't have a democracy. Then you add to that the fact that you've got to spend half of your time in the living rooms of the rich, making phone calls to the rich, paying homage to the rich—in the case of Democrats, most of whom are very good people—but nonetheless, there you are spending your time raising money instead of raising issues, raising hopes and raising hell.

Perhaps Jesse Jackson in some respects disproved that—when he was able to run in the Democratic primary with so much

less money than the other Democrats.

Yes, Jackson showed that people with strong ideas and the ability to articulate them can transcend the absolute demand for that level of money. But bear in mind that Jackson raised a lot of money. He was not outspent in every race. He was early on, but later on he was spending very serious money.

So say you don't have to raise \$10 million; you have to raise \$8 million. Until you develop a base—and the Jesse Jacksons of the world and maybe people of my ilk help do that—but until you get out of using somebody's political capital, or the political capital of several somebodies, you're not going to have a base in place in 1992 and '94 that would make it possible to run without having to amass millions of dollars.

And how do you create that base?

The base is there. People are always ahead of the politicians. And they're way ahead of the Democratic Party. Look at that dismal presidential election that we just went through. Basically it was progressives who nominated Dukakis. And then immediately they're abandoned. Shunned. Like we didn't exist. Labor unions spent maybe \$20 million in the presidential race, and they had a candidate who wouldn't say the word union, much less stand up with a union official somewhere.

And yet the people who are out there are not anti-union—certainly not anti-worker. And if you look at the issues that really mattered to people, even in that election, those issues were not the ones that were discussed; they were the issues that Jesse Jackson talked about and that I talk about. We've got some poll numbers [that show] rather astonishing stuff.

These are exit polls of people expressing what issues were important in their vote. SDI and Star Wars: only 21 percent of the voters thought that that was important. Abortion: only 35 percent—the same 35 percent who always think that. No new taxes: 45 percent. But then you get into long-term health care and health insurance for everyone: 55 per-



Photos © William Albrecht

cent. Helping the poor and homeless find jobs and earn a decent living: 66 percent. Imposing stricter environmental regulations on corporations that produce toxic waste: 73. Make sure the wealthy and big corporations pay their fair share of taxes: 77 percent. These are our issues. That's where the people are.

And that's why these mealy-mouthed political campaigners wonder why there's not a turnout. Because we're not saying anything that makes people want to go vote. So, to me, the base is already there. And of course I experience it when I go out and speak and we experience it through this agency when we give people an opportunity, the tools of self-help; boy, they pick them up enthusiastically and make things happen. They'll do the same thing politically.

So building that base means first of all getting your message and your vision out. We're not talking about sending issue papers to someone or going down a litany of positions we're in favor of; we're saying a certain vision and a certain programmatic notion. Who we're for. And who we're against. And what we're willing to do to help the ones we're for.

You put that out—recruit candidates who are willing to deliver that message. You put skilled people behind those candidates so that a good candidate doesn't run a bad campaign. You find finances for it, do the work, draw into the participation in that process those people who have been hearing your message. And then, most fundamentally, lay their agenda on the table in Austin and in Washington.

What kind of organization would this require?

This isn't going to be Hightower's Supermarket and All-Night Taco Stand. It is going to be more of a political apparatus. It's going to express a viewpoint to begin to get into the debate. It is going to rally what is already there. For example, I would think it might be possible for us to create a progressive elected officials organization. There's got to

be at least a thousand out there—school board members, city council members, and statewide officeholders—who are truly progressive. Who have nobody trying to speak to them and link them up. There's the occasional caucus of Mexican-Americans or African-Americans, but there's no overall effort. If you could establish a forum in which these kind of folks could gather and give them an agenda that both provided some service in terms of their own needs at a local level, but also a larger political agenda for the state, then you'd have something.

We are going to be a party *within* a party. I am a Democrat. And just as Chuck Robb and that world formed the Democratic Leadership Council within the Democratic Party to try to dominate our message and operations, so can I join with [U.S. Rep.] John Bryant, Mickey Leland, [Attorney General Jim] Mattox and [state Rep.] Hugo Berlanga and [state Sen.] Gonzalo Barrientos and others to try to form some sort of a populist Democratic alliance. The truth is, we don't know what the form of it is right now. AFL-CIO, a number of the leading trial lawyers in the state, some of the environmental organizations and farm organizations are the ones that we've begun with. Then we're going to reach out to many others, to try to sit around and come up with something that is not just tangible, but programmatic.

Here's the six things we think need to be established and the 19 things that need to be done. Then we go out to a larger community and say here's what we're talking about. We've already begun to get some substantial funds in to get this effort off the ground. We have important work to do with groups that are already out there—Southwest Voter Registration, Ernie Cortes and the Interfaith organizations, other efforts all over. We're not trying to duplicate what they're doing; we're not going to go for piles of money that would otherwise go to them. We want to enhance what they are doing.

Is it fair to suppose that the alliance that you're talking about would put more emphasis on the electoral process than community groups now do?

Community groups are there to do community work. We need more of them and we want to be supportive any way we could. But my purpose is to put good people in the Texas legislature who develop a financing system for this state that is fair and progressive and that also allows us to provide the services and the other programs that we need to have a responsible state, to be a big-league state. That's something everyone who might be a part of this coalition would benefit from.

Do you see a role for some sort of think tank to be the idea mechanism behind the movement?

It's essential that we develop what I would prefer to think of as a sort of policy center, rather than a think tank. That has a sort of ivory-tower sound—economists sitting around deciding what's good for the people. The policies you develop need to be rooted in actual experience of the people you're trying to reach. But we need policy people who can put a budget together. We need policy people who could say, "Here's what a fair tax structure would look like. Here's who would pay, and here's who would have their taxes reduced as a result." Washington state just passed a state minimum wage at \$4.85 an hour. We don't have that on the table down here.

O.K., you're not going to win all these

things. But we're going to be a part of the debate for a change. They're going to be talking about *our* issues as well as us having to fight their issues. So there needs to be a policy group behind it.

This is a contradiction that I sometimes see in populist politics. Populist politics seems to come from a few isolated leaders, rather than coming up from the bottom. All politics comes initially from leaders—not necessarily isolated leaders, though. You know, again, this is not a Hightower move-

Planning a party

ment. And I don't want to be the only one up front in this thing. This is wide open. Any organization, any politician who is of our stripe, I want them in here. Let's try to make something happen together.

But we can sit around for another two years and wait for it to come up from the bottom, and it's not going to. There are exciting things happening at the bottom. And I would hope to collect as much of that as I could. And have room for that at our table to the degree to which they're interested and willing to participate. But there's not even communication between a lot of it. Something that's going on in an East Texas county from a good local group is unknown by somebody in Ector County, which has a good local group.

There's a real tension within the Democratic Party nationally between two wings. You've got your Chuck Robbs and your Sam Nunn who are very uncomfortable with what you and Jesse Jackson are trying to do. In Texas traditionally we've had the same thing. Do you feel it now with the conservative wing of the state Democratic Party being a little nervous about what you're proposing?

There's no reason for them to be, in my view. Because I am talking about expanding a Democratic base and increasing Democratic officeholders. So I start with the presumption that that's a shared goal. The truth is, we are a party in transition, nationally and here in Texas. Until roughly 15 years ago we didn't have a Republican Party in Texas worthy of the name. Now we do. And we have now within the Democratic Party, nationally, not just two wings but sort of three contending viewpoints. The Chuck Robb Democratic Leadership Council side, whose approach essentially is to be moderate enough, cautious enough, maybe even Republican enough, that we can siphon off enough votes from the pool of people who are already voting to eke out 51 or 52 percent.

Then there is the populist side that I represent that says there's 90 million Americans who don't vote. Michael Dukakis lost by seven million votes. You can go fight for seven million votes off of the list of Nov. 8, 1988, or you can look at the pool of 90 million voters over there and say maybe we could get 10 [million] of those into this game. Just in terms of common sense, that is a lot deeper fishing hole.

Then there is, in addition to that, a middle sector that Dukakis sort of represented when he was campaigning in the primaries—he went to the Chuck Robb side, once he got the nomination. But in the primaries, he and Gephardt [were saying] we need to do a little

more than the Robbs of the world and less than the Hightowers of the world.

But as I say, we're a party in transition. We had perceived ourselves to be—even when we were not—a Washington-based party. We looked to leadership there, we sent our best people there. I mean, if you look at the national talk shows, and responses to the president, there are not many governors and attorney generals and agriculture commissioners who are there. We continue to be a Washington-based party in terms of our expression through the national media. I think that hurts us mainly because the greatest innovation is happening at the state levels and locally. There's a new Democratic Party being built. I don't know if we're four years or 14 years away from being there, but it's happening.

After the election I heard George Will quote a poll showing that even in the great pool of non-voters out there sentiment was pretty evenly divided between Democrat and Republican. He was trying to make the point that that non-voting pool out there really wasn't any more progressive or populist than those who did go vote.

Yeah. Typical insightful comment by Brother Will. One, they chose not to vote, which says something. Two, that was a choice not of positions but of candidates. I've got polls around here that show very clearly Dukakis was much less liked as a human being than was Bush. What was their choice? It was not a choice between populism or Bush elitism: it was a choice between Bush elitism and Dukakis elitism. If you got a guy that starts off the campaign saying the issue is competence, you're in trouble because that is not the issue. He proved to be incompetent, and demonstrated it on a regular basis in the campaign—I don't mean him personally, but the campaign.

The low point for me in the election was when the Dukakis campaign announced his housing plan. House America. And the guts of it was individuals could use their IRAs to make down payments on houses. Eighty percent of Americans don't have an IRA. Those that do, their problem is not a down payment, for the most part. It became for me sort of a watershed of what the campaign debate was about. Democrats would let you use your IRA, and the Republicans would not. Not much of a debate. So there's a non-voter out there, or even a voter, and he's thinking, "Which one of these guys is which?"

A lot of people have probably given up on the Democratic Party at this point. I wonder if you saw the piece by Bernie Sanders on the New York Times op-ed page arguing exactly the type of coalition and progressive politics you're talking about, but with the idea that it's got to come from a third party....

Maybe where he lives it's got to come from a third party. I don't think in Texas that is true. Because I think the populist base is there, and I think it is very willing to be in the Democratic Party if the party shows itself to have this populist expression. There's a lot of talk about third parties. There's talk about a labor party. There is talk about national third-party efforts; there's a lot of ferment on the progressive side of the ledger, and that's nothing but good, as far as I'm concerned.

Everybody knows that we've got to do it different. And there's going to be a lot of ideas popping up as to how to make that happen. I just have one of them. And I'm going to try mine inside the Democratic Party. □

EDITORIAL

IN THESE TIMES

"...with liberty and justice for all"

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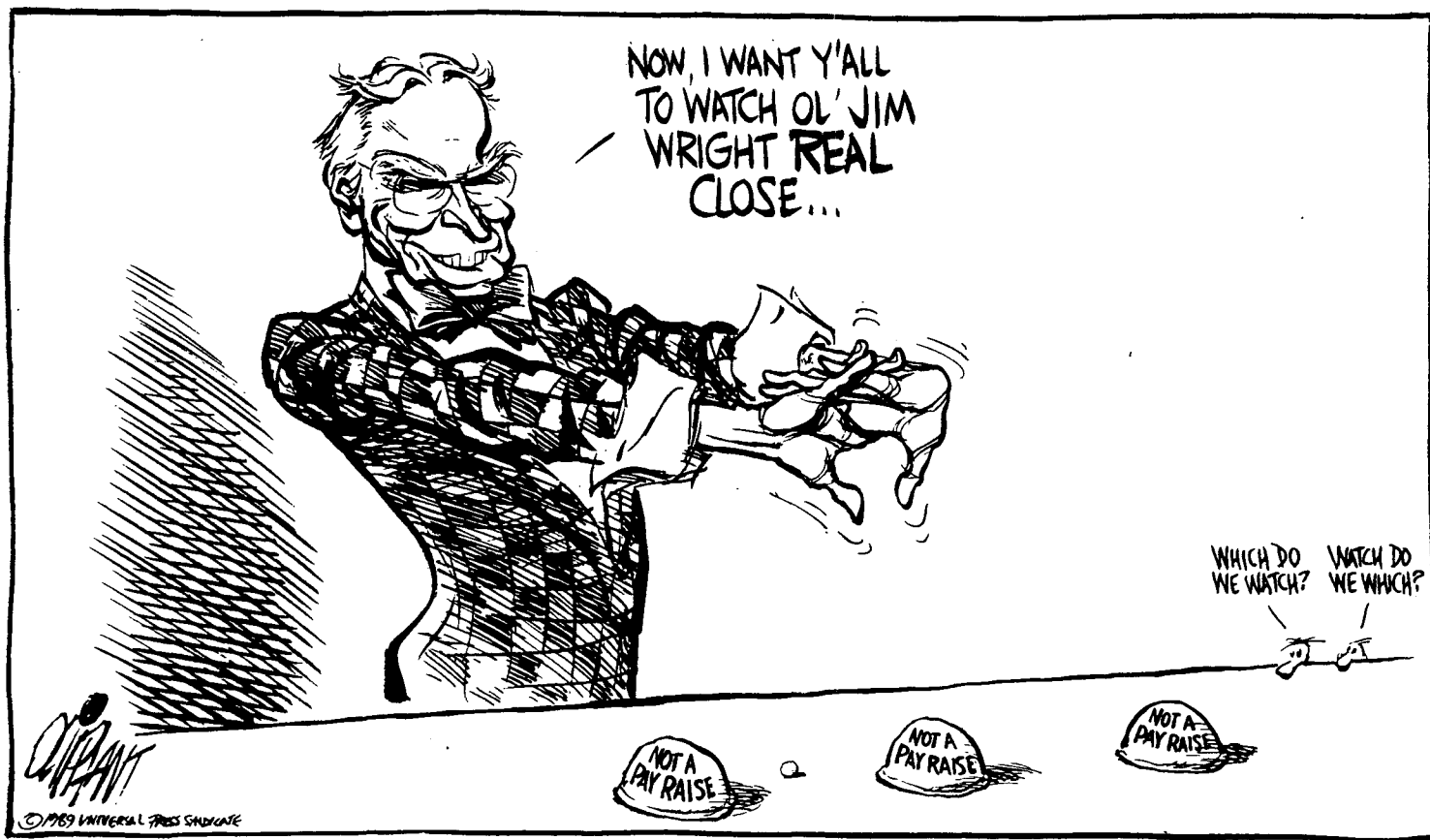
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The great congressional pay-raise caper and why it failed

Now that the federal pay raise has been buried by an avalanche of popular protest, it's time to take a calm look at the issue. The procedure itself—a congressionally created commission whose decision would automatically go into effect, absent a veto by both houses of Congress—understandably angered most citizens. We elect representatives to be accountable for their acts, not to find ways to avoid responsibility, and especially not when it involves their own personal gain. If there were to be a pay raise, it should have been openly discussed and justified.

But what about the raises? There are really two questions here. One has to do with the market, the other with public service and a commitment to the welfare of the American people. A good case can be made for pay increases for those people in government whose jobs are essentially technical—administrators, consultants, lawyers (and therefore judges). In these areas the federal government is competing both with private industry and with state and local governments, many of whose officials are more highly paid than federal officials. There is, of course, more prestige attached to most federal jobs, but it is also more expensive to live in Washington than most

places, and the tenure in government jobs—judgeships excepted—is tenuous. So, in order not to make it a sacrifice to take a government job, it makes sense to keep federal jobs competitive by paying salaries commensurate with those in the private sector.

The question of Congress is another matter. Here there are two conflicting principles. On one hand, legislators should be paid enough so that a person without a private fortune can afford to serve in reasonable comfort. Otherwise, as is true of some city councils and county boards, only the well-to-do can afford to hold office, which reinforces the already predominant influence of the wealthy in our public life. But, on the other hand, the salaries should not be so high as to lead our legislators to identify even more strongly with what used to be called the monied interests. Members of Congress, and especially of the House, after all, are supposed to be representative of the nation at large, yet they already receive salaries that put them in the upper 2 percent of the population. If you make \$89,500 a year, plus an average expense account of \$148,000, have an ironclad pension plan and many other perks, it is hard to remember how most people live, and therefore to represent them honestly.

And there's the rub. The revolt against the pay raise is largely fueled by the belief, for the most part justified, that members of Congress do not represent the interest of the majority of working people in this country, but the special interests of our corporate rulers. And the way Congress went about arranging its pay increase only strengthened that belief. If Congress really does need a pay raise, its members should be able to explain why to the satisfaction of most Americans. If that majority does not think they deserve more pay, they should not have it.

AIDS marriage test yields inevitable results

In September 1987, when the state of Illinois passed a mandatory AIDS virus test for couples applying for marriage licenses, we pointed out that the tests would be a diversion of energy and resources from the task of research, education and care for those at high risk. And we warned that the test requirement would create "widespread and unnecessary anxiety and fear" among marriage license applicants who have false positive test results.

It took only one month of the test program—which went into effect in January 1988—to make it clear that these objections were understated. And yet Illinois politicians playing to the grandstand left the law in effect. Now, after a full year of operation, the results are irrefutable. Marriages in Illinois dropped from 99,212 in 1987 to 77,729 last year. Some 20,000 couples left the state to get married and many others who could not afford the test or a trip out of state put off marriage altogether. The state of Illinois lost hundreds of thousands of dollars in license fees as couples flocked to Wisconsin,

Iowa and other states where tests are not required, while those who got married in Illinois spent a total of \$5.4 million for 155,458 tests. Only 26 of these were positive, and these included several false positives, which in some cases caused panicked couples to break off engagements or abort pregnancies.

To find a single AIDS infection by this method cost \$200,000, and yet 20 of the 26 positive results were from intravenous drug users, recipients of blood transfusions or bisexuals—all of whom could have been found more efficiently through programs directed at high-risk groups.

In the face of this experience, a loud chorus of physicians, state legislators, county clerks and AIDS experts are calling for repeal of the testing program. Even its strongest legislative advocates are bowing to the inevitable. "Enough is enough," the chairman of the Illinois House Human Services Committee says. "We have to bring some sanity to this. We had a chance to test this measure. It's been an embarrassing experience."

And so it has, but one that could easily have been avoided if only the legislators and the media had heeded the suggestions of the medical community and the representatives of people with AIDS. Now, with repeal seemingly assured, an improved program of education and research is in order.

LETTERS

Real women

I TAKE ISSUE WITH MILES HARVEY'S FILM REVIEW OF *Working Girl* ("Popular Girl needs some work," *ITT*, Jan. 11).

Harvey calls this movie an "odd celebration of corruption" which conveys the message: "nice little girls get nice little jobs, while threatening bitches get fired." In this last quote he is referring to the heroine's boss, Katharine Parker (Sigourney Weaver), whom he believes is the "only real woman in the story."

Contrary to Harvey, I do not see this film as a "celebration of corruption," but as a triumph of a working-class woman (complete with a working-class conscience and image of herself) in a capitalist society. Sure, she had to break "the rules," but would Harvey rather see her abide by them and get nowhere?

Harvey states that the "girl," Tess (Melanie Griffith), has "no conscience" in her pursuit of cold cash and a piece of the corporate pie. What we all must understand is that her conscience represents the internalization of working-class values and culture—a culture that fosters self-defeat, denial and passivity in women, not to mention materialism in both sexes.

Tess' boss, Katharine, is not the only "real woman" in the movie. True, she is the only upper-class, well-educated, wealthy woman who was probably given what she needed all her life since birth to attain such a status and the accompanying competitive "successful" capitalist self-image. Tess, on the other hand, carries her working-class self-image with her to the boardroom, but this does not make her less of a woman.

Despite its faults, this film makes a contribution in shedding light on the reality faced by working-class women today—a sorely neglected topic.

Linda K. Biro
Riverside, Calif.

Near miss

THANKS FOR YOUR INSIGHTFUL ARTICLE (*ITT*, JAN. 11) connecting the Pan Am air tragedy in Scotland to the crisis in the Mideast. My experience seems to contradict a critical point in that article, which reported that the Germans checked every bag going on the plane, except for five bags under U.S. jurisdiction.

I flew on a Pan Am flight from Frankfurt to New York City on Dec. 15, 1988, six days before the plane was destroyed (four days before Christmas) and five days after the U.S. Embassy was alerted about the possible bombing. I was startled by the special security ring surrounding the main Pan Am check-in counter but none of the other airlines. Yet, this uniformed security was formidable only in appearance.

The official looked at my U.S. passport, merely asked three questions and got three answers: "Did you pack your own bags?" "Yes." "Were you within eyesight of your bags at all times since you packed them?" "Yes." "Has anyone given you anything to carry onto the plane in your luggage?" "No." I then checked my two big bags at the main Pan Am counter, and they disappeared through the wall on a conveyor belt—obviously toward handlers a few feet away who would put the bags on a flatbed cart to take them to the plane. They never examined my "checked" luggage in person or with an

X-ray! And the same happened to virtually all the other passengers. My carry-on bag, however, was examined with the X-ray machine on the way toward the flight gate.

I am upset that the German and U.S. governments put me at risk—missing the death plane by one week—and, worse, might have been able to prevent the bombing with decent security. They evidently did not want to do much to stop this tragedy.

Finally, Ronald Reagan might have reduced the probability of this mass murder of U.S. citizens by not having our Navy shoot down an Iranian airliner four days before their national holiday.

Bill Moyer
San Francisco

In praise of socialism

THE EULOGIES OR MALEDICTIONS MUTTERED these days as a farewell to socialism are delivered over an empty grave. Socialism hasn't even had a chance yet.

To clear one hurdle, let me remind those who need reminding that the cruel indignities perpetrated in the name of socialism come second to the same indignities perpetrated for 200 years in the name of capitalism. It has taken that long, plus enormous and bloody labor fights, plus two world wars, to instill Western capitalism with some respect for its own citizens—and that only in the advanced and privileged democracies (whose well-being now is still founded on the iniquities of their pasts).

Let us consider then the second and, right now, more relevant flaw of socialist endeavor: its inefficiency. At this junction it has surely been shown that the system of everyone for himself or herself, with self-improvement and profit as society's engine, works better in delivering the goods. That does not mean that it will go on working in the future, though.

Our planet, with its limited resources and elasticity, is being stripped as if there were no tomorrow. If there is to be a tomorrow, this must end, and not even an avalanche of legislation within our profit economy can take care of the staggering changes in attitude this will require.

If the argument that there's no future for socialism, "You can't change human nature," is correct, it also proves there is no future for humanity. In the long run, we simply cannot afford capitalism. Human nature has to change, and some form of socialism has to do the job. We cannot afford a system where the acquisition of ever more and better consumer goods is the reason for working and, indeed, for living.

The problem of the future will not be forcing people to work, but, on the contrary, to keep them fulfilled and unalienated while

there is no useful work for them to do. We must find new rationales (maybe consolations) for our lives beyond those of acquisition and profit. They are to be found in the fulfillment of feelings, of solidarity, shown not in waving the flag, but in being our brother's and sister's keeper, in protecting nature, in service to the common weal.

We have been conditioned to consider statements such as these pious claptrap. But what other choice is there? The importance of owning things has to be scaled down; it is exhausting the planet. And those who fall behind are engulfing themselves, and then all of us, in what they see as their alternative, waves of drugs and of crime. Worldwide, capitalism is not only making the rich richer and the poor poorer, it is also attacking the lives of those rich now, for they are becoming prisoners in their own enclaves of possessions.

The world is crying out for decentralized societies where production and communications must be under daily and direct control of the people, because success cannot be measured any more in increase, in the meeting of private purposes, but only in sharing and conservation. And what better name is there for such systems than socialism?

Hans Koning
New Haven, Conn.

Overcrowded greenhouse

CONGRATULATIONS FOR DICK RUSSELL'S EXCELLENT series on the greenhouse effect, which is possibly the best yet in a non-technical publication.

It is premature, possibly, to question whether, as the editorial comment indicates, the overheating of the Earth can be stopped by "simple sacrifices." Since the Earth is already overheating, it is evident that, with our present energy technology, there are already too many people on our planet relative to the planet's capacity to absorb the carbon dioxide we produce by burning fuels.

Since population experts expect the Earth's population to increase from its present total of something over 5 billion people to 8-10 billion soon after the end of the century, the amount of carbon dioxide being produced will increase by as much as 75 percent (allowing for the lesser use of fuel per capita in countries with the highest rate of population increase). The proposal of prominent world scientists for a 20 percent reduction in the world's current use of fuel obviously will have to be revamped due to the increase caused by growth of population.

This factor has been recognized by some

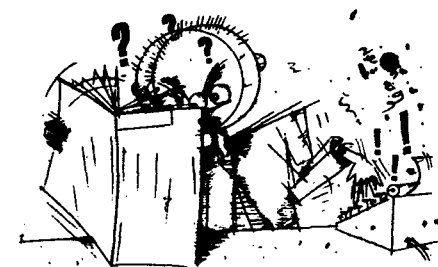
leaders in population-control organizations, but it is not yet an apparent factor in the policies of many nations, religious groups and "right to life" organizations. Indeed, the pope urged the people of Uruguay to have more children last spring, and some Third World leaders are believed to be in favor of larger populations.

Reducing the use of fuel by 20 percent can be approached by energy conservation on a more extensive and intensive basis, but if we have to allow for the growth of population, we presumably will need to have crash programs to develop large-scale generation of electrical energy safely through solar power plants and other alternate systems. Constructing these plants, and also developing more mass transit and minimizing single-home construction are not simple projects. They will require huge capital outlays and altered priorities around the world. The financial and human resources for this can be drawn from the trillion dollars the world now spends annually on military budgets. But there are, of course, both economic and political hurdles to be jumped to achieve this.

The stakes, as Dick Russell notes, are awesome. It is not beyond the realm of scientific estimates to predict that the survival of the human race could terminate if the greenhouse effect and ozone depletion are not contained.

This is a matter that should unite all of us, regardless of our politics. Politics will not mean much, nor will the size of our share of the pie, if the pie vanishes in an ecological catastrophe.

Frederick S. Lightfoot
Greenport, N.Y.



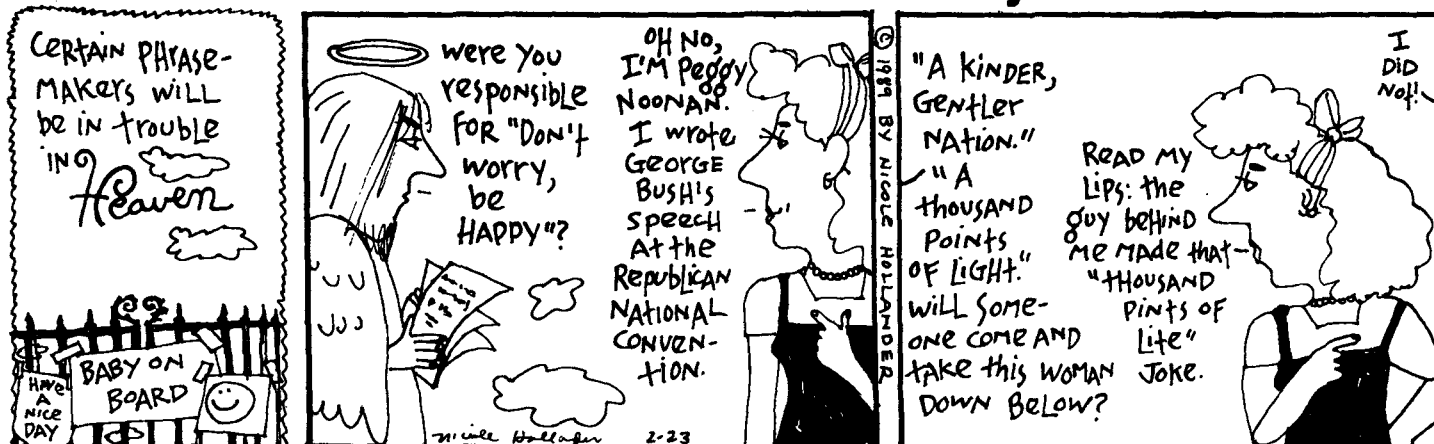
Correction

A review of Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky's book *Manufacturing Consent* (*ITT*, Jan. 25) inadvertently transposed the order of the authors' names.

Editor's note: Please try to keep letters under 250 words in length. Otherwise we may have to make drastic cuts, which may change what you want to say. Also, if possible, please type and double-space letters—or at least write clearly and with wide margins.

by Nicole Hollander

SYLVIA



By Marlene Nadle

THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION IS OFF TO AN active start in its foreign policy toward the Mideast and Soviet Union, but in Latin America the new president faces problems of crisis proportions. The recent election of Carlos Andres Perez in Venezuela is just the first in what is expected to be a new wave of populist presidents to be elected this year. These leaders are likely to reject the U.S.-backed policies being carried out by their current governments. Perez' influence is already seen in Venezuela's recent decision to suspend payment of part of its debt.

Perez took office on February 2 and began to implement the agenda first articulated by Mexican opposition leader Cuauhtemoc Cardenas, who finished a strong second in his country's still-disputed 1988 presidential election. In May Carlos Menem is favored to win in Argentina. In November, Leonel Brizola has a strong chance of gaining the presidency in Brazil, unless the military intervenes.

Analysts expect these populists to head governments that are more nationalistic and combative in their relations with the U.S. They have all indicated a desperate willingness to risk non-payment on all or part of the billions in foreign debt owed to U.S. bankers. All have opposed the U.S. economic policy toward Latin America, which they believe is stagnating their countries and making their governments sacrifice all other needs in order to gather money to pay the debt. These populists

George Bush and Latin America's debt rebellion

have built their support with appeals to voters who are angry because their countries have stopped developing, to the middle class whose way of life has been ravaged by inflation, and to the poor who have suffered the worst of the recession, hunger and despair.

On the border: Predictions about how the Bush administration will respond to the populist rebellion cut two ways. Larry Birns, a Washington-based analyst, thinks a mutually destructive confrontation between the U.S. and Latin America is inevitable. Other pessimistic observers are concerned because they believe Bush does not understand the nature of the major shift of politics and priorities taking place in Latin America. Roberto Unger, who is close to Brazil's Brizola, explains the populist shift from a Latin perspective. "This is a practical matter of national survival, not ideology," he says. "The populist politicians believe they have no other choice."

For the analysts who believe Bush will misread and mishandle the crisis, there has been little encouraging in his press conferences. He has announced a review of debt policy that would "include not just Treasury, but the national security people because we have enormous problems, particularly in our hemisphere." This percep-



tion of the populists as a national security threat, rather than traditional politicians trying to meet the needs of their constituents, throws into question whether the CIA-chief-turned-president will use covert action to intervene in elections and governments.

The less than optimistic view of Bush's response extends to the substance of his emerging debt strategy, which is insufficient to meet the coming crisis. Sen. Bill Bradley (D-NJ), a leading proponent of policy reform, says, "If [Bush] is serious about encouraging and supporting economic reform in the developing world, he will have to consider interest or debt reduction." Bush has rejected compulsory debt reduction. He is reported also to have rejected the creation of a special debt bank that is the key proposal of many debt reformers. The Bush transition team indicated that the strategy would be incremental and evolutionary rather than sweeping and radical.

One of Bush's goals is to increase U.S. loans to Latin America. This merely continues the current strategy that has Latins taking out new loans to pay their old loans which has nearly doubled their debt since 1982. Populists are rebelling against this strategy and demanding debt reduction. The closest Bush comes to their demands is having the Treasury Department consider regulatory, accounting and tax changes that would make voluntary reduction of interest rates, and possibly of debt principal, more appealing to the banks. However, as Bush has admitted, voluntarism didn't get many banks to increase loans to debtor nations, which Reagan-Bush Cabinet member James Baker urged in 1985.

Bush as a "pragmatist": Analysts who take a more positive view believe Bush will take a more far-reaching approach once actually faced with almost simultaneous rebellion in three of the major Latin American countries. Professor John Bailey of Georgetown University says, "Bush is a pragmatist. He will be flexible."

Those who expect Bush to move on his policy say he'll do so because of the factors

operating on him rather than his personal inclinations. One of the most important of those factors is Congress. Even the debt review Bush said he ordered was not voluntary. It was mandated by a February 23 deadline imposed by legislation that required Treasury to study broad-scale debt relief, and, if it rejects that approach, to explain why to the lawmakers.

This emerging consensus for greater change on debt policy, some argue, could force Bush to accommodate the Democrat-controlled Congress on this issue in order to get their cooperation on the rest of his program. An aide in the office of Sen. Paul Sarbanes (D-MO) said Bush would be pushed on his policy by the threat that the initiative could be taken away from him. Rep. Donald Pease (D-OH) has already introduced legislation that would create what Bush opposes, an international debt agency that would reduce the loans owed by the Third World to their market value, which averages 40 cents on a dollar.

Other analysts believe Bush will be pressured to change by Northern countries that are leaving the U.S. almost completely isolated in its debt stand. Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachov, in his recent speech to the U.N., also called for a debt agency to buy back and discount Third World loans. French President Francois Mitterrand, along with West Germany and even Japan, has called for substantive debt reduction, which proved workable in the '40s.

Populist power: The most important factor, some believe, will be the populists themselves. They could become a formidable problem for U.S. policy-makers. Perez played a major role as a continental leader during his first term as Venezuelan president in the '70s and is likely to resume it with the high energy that has him working 18-hour days. He is expected to use his high-profile contacts with European leaders for additional leverage in changing U.S. policy. There is speculation that to better mobilize the effort to meet Latin American needs he will attempt to make the Latin American Economic System (SELA), of which the U.S. is not a member, the main forum for regional action.

Perez announced part of the populists' goal when he said no Latin country should pay more than 20 percent of its export earnings on debt. This is a large change from the 45 percent of its export earnings Venezuela paid this year on its \$35 billion debt, the 56 percent Argentina paid on its \$57 billion bill and the 35 percent Brazil paid on its \$121 billion. Perez also shares the populists' goal of a change to development that is "socially efficient" and benefits the majority of the people, rather than the traditional U.S.-supported development model that is just economically efficient and geared to export earnings.

It is too soon to know whether Bush's solution to the populist rebellion will be a punitive, hard-line stand with minimal policy change, or a truly innovative break with current strategy. The alternative to a bold new approach, warns Lara Resende of Brazil's central bank, is that ultimately the U.S. could end up holding debt worth nothing as the countries of Latin America sink into chaos.

Marlene Nadle is a journalist and senior research fellow at the Council on Hemispheric Affairs.

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Social Notes

Though the U.S., and indeed the Free World, has lost an old and valued friend in the form of General Alfredo Stroessner (at the time of writing preparing for exile in Chile), President Bush may not find the new Paraguayan political landscape utterly unfamiliar. The new strongman of Asunción—at least in the first post-Stroessner days—has been Gen. Andres Rodriguez. This doughty soldier caused some surprise by invoking the Paraguayan constitution, which requires speedy democratic elections. But he is also widely known in Paraguay as one of that nation's leading drug traffickers, particularly in heroin. He is therefore, most likely, a longtime contact and perhaps employee of the CIA, in the manner of that great Panamanian, Gen. Manuel Noriega, and therefore well known to the president.

More Good News for Freedom

Amid his sighs at the eviction of Stroessner, George Bush heads off to Hirohito's funeral and to the Chinese People's Republic, where, as the White House press handouts have it, he will issue statements supportive of China's steady progress toward a "free-market economy" and all the social and philosophical amenities associated with the capitalist system.

Bush will find steady, even dramatic progress since his sojourn in China as U.S. envoy back in the mid-'70s. In these days of public exultations about the resounding defeat of socialism worldwide, no better example can be found than China to attest to the go-ahead spirit of entrepreneurial zeal, transforming a land once caught in the jaws of doctrinaire Marxism. As Nicholas Kristof put it in *The New York Times* on January 1, "China may finally be emerging into the kind of growth seen in Japan, South Korea and Hong Kong.... China's miracle may just be beginning."

On top of a no-strike law brought in in 1983, there is much to fascinate the new U.S. president, even though 19th-century British industrialists would find much in the "new" China familiar to them. By official Chinese government estimates, 20 percent of the work force consists of child labor. A recent article in *Business Week* discussed a typical situation at Kader Enterprises Ltd., a Hong Kong firm that has set up shop in Shekou. At the time of the reporter's visit, the factory was rushing out Christmas toys for the American market and was under pressure from U.S. companies to get the toys out in time. Two thousand six hundred Chinese teenagers, all young girls, were working 14-hour shifts, seven days a week. Once or twice a month they put in 24-hour shifts. All this for a salary of \$31 a month, with 12 cents an hour in overtime pay. The employees, who spend their waking hours making Mickey and Minnie Mouse dolls, sleep six to a room.

A Kader representative told *Business Week*. "We can work these girls all day and all night, while in Hong Kong it would be impossible." Andy Lee, Kader's Hong Kong manager, said that the company was resisting efforts by the Chinese government to cut back on hours: "We told them, this is the toy biz. If you don't allow us to do things our way, we'll close down our Chinese factories and move to Thailand."

Other welcome signs of free-market reforms include burgeoning prostitution, ris-

ASHES & DIAMONDS

By Alexander Cockburn

ing infant mortality, diminishing standards of health care, a widening gap between male and female wages, casualization of labor, rampant corruption, usury and income disparities of up to 1,000-to-1, particularly in the countryside. Carl Riskin, professor of economics at Queen's College, says, "Socialism, for the Chinese leadership, is only a legitimacy concept now. If they threw it out, they'd have no reason to remain in power." Riskin reckons the ideology of the leadership is "pure Chicago School. They've been seduced by the record of South Korea and Taiwan."



Body Sale

Evidence of the free market's potential comes also from Turkey, a faithful friend of freedom. That nation's police have just arrested Tunc Kunter for running an operation in traded human body parts on unbusinesslike lines. Kunter was accused of "cheating." He was dealing with Turkish peasants, who had been offered \$3,540 to donate a kidney and to travel to London to undergo the operation. The man in charge of the transfer of kidneys from Third to First World human receptacles has been Dr. Raymond Crockett of the privately owned Wellington Humana Hospital in West London. Crockett has told the *British Independent*, "I would be satisfied there is no duress. As far as anything else is concerned, it's not my brief." There's something less than forthright about this syntax.

Three years ago a similar trade involving Pakistanis was uncovered in London. The Ministry of Health, controlled by the Thatcher government, ordered a review, finally adopting the position that such a trade was not illegal. It would be odd for the department to have said anything else, since any regulation or impediment in the trade would disturb the proper motions of the free market, hailed by the prime minister on almost a daily basis.

A couple of years ago I mentioned in this column allegations that a similar trade in body parts was taking place between the U.S. and Honduras. The allegations were made in the Mexican paper *Excelsior*. Shortly thereafter, the U.S. Information Agency announced that such rumors were part of a Soviet "disinformation" campaign designed to cast the Free Market (i.e., Free World) in a bad light. The mainstream press here dutifully accepted the "disinformation" version. Meanwhile, want ads in Brazilian papers openly seek body parts for cash.

The Skull Beneath the Skin

As part of his kinder, gentler approach to human affairs, George Bush has now made John Negroponte the U.S. ambassador to

Mexico, thus indicating his favor for one of the most hawkish plenipotentiaries of the Reagan era. Negroponte was a particularly slimy pro-contra man as ambassador in Honduras and then in government in Washington.

Bush and Baker's chosen successor to Elliott Abrams is Bernard Aronson. I've read pious cant in some newspapers about the selection of Aronson being indicative of a swerve toward bipartisanship, compromise, "moderation," etc. This is to forget that Abrams was a sign of bipartisanship in the sense that he came out of that portion of the political stable given over to Cold War Democrats (almost the only known kind, I should add). In this sense Aronson is exactly like Abrams. His credentials include writing some of Reagan's vilest (and most mendacious) appeals to increase contra aid, screeds in such "soft" sources of contra support as the *New York Review of Books*, patron of Robert Leiken.

Lying by Silence

After years of misrepresentation through coverage, the mainstream U.S. press is now, in its treatment of Nicaragua, shifting to misrepresentation through silence. Even *The New York Times*' Stephen Kinzer is leaving, subject of an affectionate farewell in *La Prensa* as he does so. Such silence naturally precludes any coverage of continued U.S. aggression against Nicaragua. The year 1988 saw a 22 percent increase in strategic spy flights over Nicaragua compared with the previous year, the majority of them after the signing of the Sapoa Accord. Tactical reconnaissance flights from Honduras rose 60 percent over the same period. In November 1988, the CIA reactivated the "Hasentus route" for air delivery of military supplies to contras on the south Atlantic coast. General Humberto Ortega has stated that Nicaraguan radar detected 10 supply flights originating from Ilopango Air Base in San Salvador, where President Bush's old friend Felix Rodriguez once labored under the direction of Bush's office, with Luis Pasada Carriles at his side. (Carriles, you may remember, has been charged with blowing up a Cuban civilian airliner, murdering 73 persons in the process.)

The foregoing information comes courtesy of *Barricada International*, which has a good track record on getting such things right. It's well worth subscribing to this English-language version of the Nicaraguan paper. For your subscription send \$30 (\$10 more for

institutions) to *Barricada*, Box 410150, San Francisco, CA 94103.

Worse Than Met the Eye

Discussing coups and cops recently, I mentioned the FBI's spy in CISPES, Frank Varelli. The general view is that FBI Director William Sessions made a forthright and manly display to Congress in admitting blame on the part of the bureau and in saying that he would ride closer herd than his predecessor (and current CIA chief) William Webster. Sessions spoke to Congress last September. At the start of this year Ross Gelbspan reported in the *Boston Globe* (January 2) that FBI documents acquired by the *Globe* showed that Sessions had been less than forthright.

The FBI, Gelbspan wrote, continued its probe of political activists 14 months longer than Sessions told Congress. Contrary to public statements, the bureau actively investigated the sanctuary movement. The bureau, in Gelbspan's words, "actively collaborated with the Salvadoran National Guard in its surveillance of both American and Salvadoran leftists and shared that information with several other government agencies" including the Immigration and Naturalization Service, the State Department, the Secret Service, the Customs Service and maybe the CIA.

The way things worked was as follows. The bureau sent Varelli to San Salvador, where he obtained the names of 700 Salvadoran leftists compiled by the National Guard, the Ministry of Defense and the death squads. These names, brought back by Varelli, were then circulated to the U.S. agencies listed above, with the instructions, "All receiving agencies are requested to conduct name checks on all potential victims." In other words, the U.S. and Salvadoran security services were entirely coordinated in their onslaughts on the Salvadoran left, so thoughtfully deciphered by the FBI as "potential victims."

Afterthought

It is scarcely surprising, given the turn to the Free Market, that the Chinese leadership takes the same line on beggars as Ed Koch. *The Beijing Review*, just like the mayor of New York, says that beggars aren't reduced to beggary; they chose it as a profession: "Only 20 percent of them are reduced to begging by difficulties in life." In other words, begging is fashionable. The rich snort cocaine. The poor panhandle. Neither activity has anything to do with the economic and spiritual environment induced by government. ■

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By Tom Engelhardt

IN A SURPRISINGLY MODEST STUCCO cottage on Bloch Street in suburban San Diego lives Professor Woodrow ("Woody") Wilson, who holds the Turing Chair in the combined English/Computer Sciences degree program at the University of San Diego and is this nation's pre-eminent Rhetoric Hacker.

I was drawn to the remarkable 32-year-old full professor and others in his strange new profession in search of some in-depth analysis of George Bush's widely praised inaugural address. Still, as Professor Wilson ushered me into his computer-packed living room, I had to admit to him that I would have been less surprised had I found him in a cyberpunk novel.

"Who said Southern California isn't a cyberpunk novel?" he replied, smiling. "In all seriousness, there's nothing futuristic about Rhetoric Hacking, or RH as we call it. Once speechwriting went computer-generated, we just naturally came into existence. Clear off those floppies and take a seat."

I indicated that, before turning to his analysis of the inaugural address, I was curious to know a little about him, about how he got here.

"Simple," he answered, "RH is a Southern California phenomenon. Don't ask me why, but the money's here. The profession's in its infancy, of course, but I like to think of it as an analytic-predictive science. You see, once speeches—and I don't care whether you're talking political, military or corporate here—once they ceased to be written by individuals, it became possible, at least in theory, to computer-disassemble them into their component policy parts. And I guess there are corporate interests out here willing to pay cash for that knowledge."

"So I'm a Californian to pay my bills, but it's love of the discipline that keeps me here. I'm a Maine boy by birth, MIT-trained, an Easterner at heart. All you have to do is look out that window for proof."

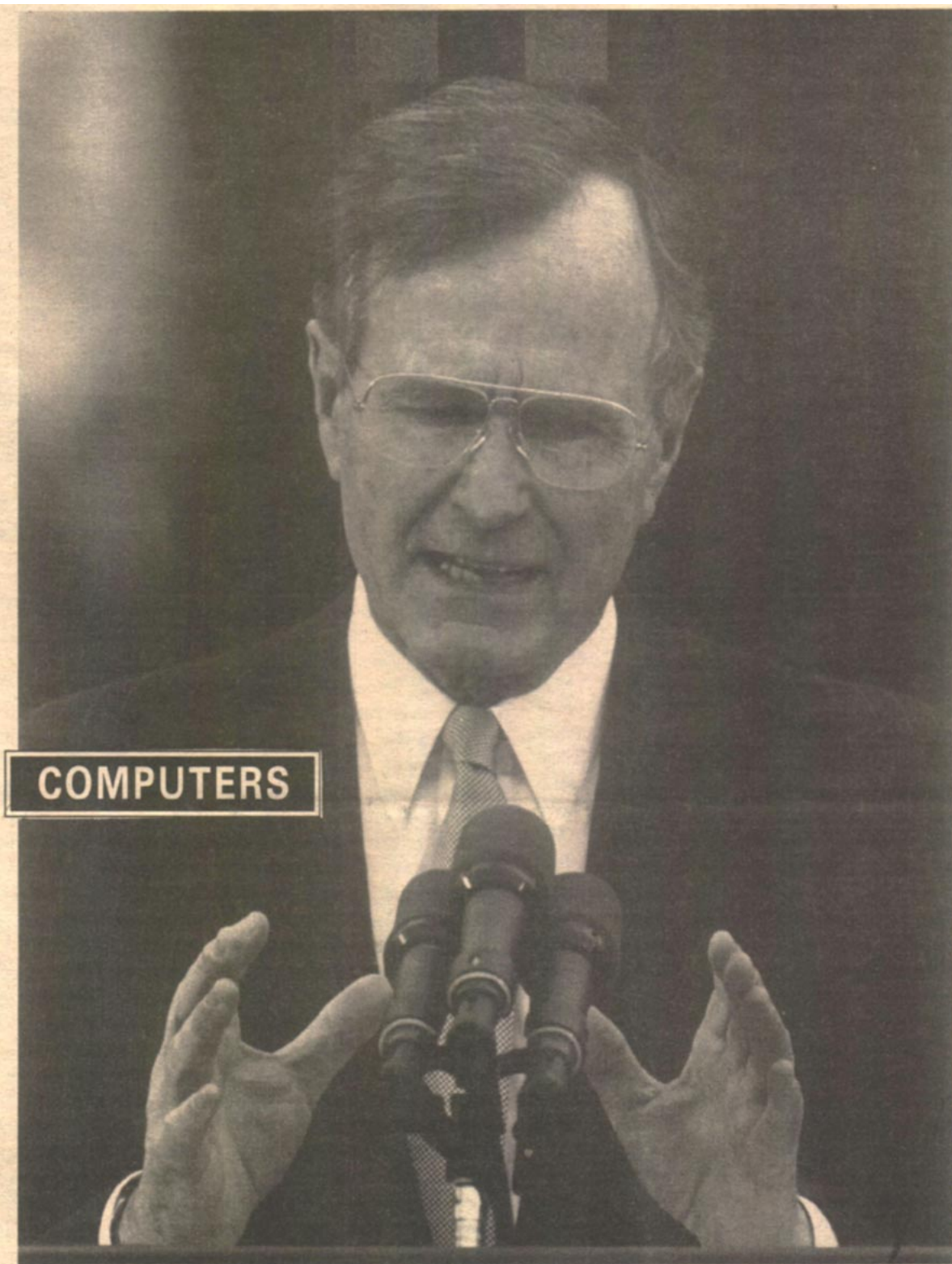
I glanced into his backyard at what appeared to be the top half of a small, fortress-like, concrete-roofed enclosure.

"That was my pool. I had it converted to house my mainframe. It's attached by tunnel to the basement and, by the way, totally bombproof! With that and this," he added, sweeping the room with a single gesture, "I have the power to break any speech another computer can encode."

"As for the inaugural address..." I muttered to bring him back to the subject at hand.

"Well, I've worked on a lot of speeches in my day, but that one's what we call a 'hot snag.' I can assure you of one thing, though. This speechwriter Peggy Noonan—and I'd put that name in quotes if I were you—she doesn't exist. On the evi-

Love bytes: rhetorical hacks and the Rhetoric Hackers



dence of the inaugural address, it's statistically impossible for a single speechwriter, or even two or three together, to have produced the profound space-time disorientation of its underlying images, or in RH terms, its degree of 'RAM dissonance.' There's no question that Peggy Noonan is actually one or more software programs, and the speculation in the field is that 'she' and the speech she 'wrote' were generated by one of the Defense Department's systems.

"You can only take a guess like that due to recent breakthroughs in the recognition of programming signature phrases. These act like signposts pointing toward the origins of any piece of modern rhetoric. In addition, DOD systems are notoriously cumbersome. You might even say 'bureaucratic,' if such a term could

be applied to a computer. Forget the complex programming problems of Star Wars, even the DOD's computer-generated speeches clunk. I have to admit, though, it does make our job a damn sight easier when it comes to identification.

"Now this speech we're talking about was a dud even by DOD standards. I mean, a 'healing' speech riven by clashing modules of imagery? Who ever heard of it? Here," Professor Wilson suddenly reached across me to pick up a sheaf of sprocketed paper and began leafing through it. "No sooner is a 'new breeze' blowing than we're breaking 'new ground,' walking through a door into 'a room called Tomorrow,' making a 'vow on marble steps,' ending our differences 'at the water's edge,' fretting that we 'can't turn back the clocks,' announcing that

'we don't wish to turn back time' and eugolizing a time when 'our mothers were young.' Such confused image location leads to classic

There's no question that Peggy Noonan is actually one or more software programs, and there is speculation in the field that "she" and the speech she "wrote" were generated by DOD systems.

tautologies like 'the old ideas are new again because they're not old' or statements of bizarre spatial disorientation. Here, take this one: 'Good faith can be a spiral that endlessly moves on.'

"Of course, you could have discovered this much just by picking up the speech yourself. But it's amazing! No one notices when the parts don't fit. You know, I'm in on the ground floor of a new computer science called Movie Hacking, and we're finding the same thing there. Various bits and pieces of film randomly placed side by side now make up the majority of Hollywood hits. One theory among hackers is that no one notices because of the instant and effusive media attention that follows. And a lot of us believe that that attention is itself computer-generated. However, I won't push the point on you."

"The only point I will push is based on my analysis of the mixed-metaphor status of presidential addresses historically. I have already gone back as far as Van Buren and hope to be all the way to Washington by the end of next month. What there can be no question about is that the clashing image content of all political speeches has been on an extraordinary trajectory upward for the last decade. This particular speech is only an extreme example of its kind."

"The real question is what kind of extremity it represents. We've been arguing the question back and forth on *that*." Professor Wilson pointed at a shimmering amber screen set into the wall on the far side of the room. "That's our R-Double-H connection, our professional hotline and bulletin board. For instance, Jack Kahn up at Pomona State, another Easterner, by the way, considers the address reflective of the paralytic state of what he likes to call the Bush Id-Ware—that is, a numbing confusion of purpose, direction, time and vision at the deepest, computer-driven levels of the new administration. He highlights the last image in the speech—I see history as a book with many pages—all, he points out, obviously blanks—as striking evidence for his thesis."

"And he might be right, but I'd like to leave you with a more disturbing possibility. My research suggests that even a DOD rhetoric program would be unlikely to produce the sort of image dissonance evident in this speech. In fact, as I compute them, the odds against such an occurrence once in a century are approximately 10,000-to-1. So, for my money, everything points to one overriding possibility. Somewhere in the bowels of the Bush administration a computer virus is loose and slowly replicating itself."

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Tom Engelhardt is an editor at Pantheon Books.

By Mike Tidwell

Kennedy mystique and mistakes

ON OCTOBER 22, 1962, MY FATHER jumped out of bed, put on his Air Force uniform, ran onto the tarmac of a Strategic Air Command base in Arkansas and started loading nuclear bombs onto B-47s.

"They kept telling us it wasn't a drill," he told me years later. "But we knew it was a drill. It had to be a drill." Then the planes flew away. "We stood on the runway and watched each plane take off. The planes had never, ever taken off all together with the bombs before."

Whenever books or films about the Cuban missile crisis begin to evoke images that seem too fantastic, I listen to my father. He makes it all real. He participated. "I was sure I was living my last day," he has told me. John F. Kennedy had ordered the planes on alert. He had ordered preparations toward the possible destruction of the world.

War machine, Peace Corps: It never came to that, of course. Eventually the crisis ended. The planes came back, and my father helped unload them. Then Kennedy returned his attention to different orders. He

told young Americans to go save what the planes hadn't destroyed. He had founded the Peace Corps in 1961, and by late 1962 he was sending volunteers all over the world. Make it better, he told them.

Twenty-five years after Kennedy's assassination, it is interesting to note

INTERVENTION

that two of the things he is best remembered for—the Cuban missile crisis and the Peace Corps—make little sense coming from the same man. It is also interesting to note that this contradiction is not an aberration. There is something insistently American about it. One reason Kennedy remains so popular in memory is that he personified some of our nation's deep contradictory impulses. Do we dominate the world with force (and risk destroying it) or do we strive to change it and improve it through goodwill?

The Peace Corps, now 27 years old, is alive and well and currently

undergoing one of the largest expansions in its history. World poverty is a stubborn foe, and the agency says it needs more volunteers in order to remain faithful to Kennedy's dream. Congress has agreed to double the number of volunteers worldwide from 5,000 to 10,000 by 1992. This expansion will include the historic entry of the Peace Corps into China.

At the same time, the American military juggernaut steams on. A trillion-dollar peacetime buildup has produced the following armed forces personnel levels: Air Force, 598,000; Army, 770,000; Navy 602,000; Marines, 199,000. And nuclear weapons

production and secret wars—popular in Kennedy's day—have not been left out. The metaphors have changed from gaps and dominoes to windows and brush fires, but the impulse is the same: intense concern for national security.

Deep contradictions: This tendency toward contradictory policies is not a phenomenon restricted to our leaders in Washington. It is—if my life is any indication—a contradiction we Americans bump into in our work, our homes and our family lives.

After leaving the Air Force in 1964, my father went to college on the GI

This tendency toward contradictory policies is not a phenomenon restricted to our leaders. It is—if my life is any indication—a contradiction we Americans bump into every day.

Bill and pursued a career in electronics. By the time I graduated from college he was running his own company. But after all those job changes and family migrations, he still had his Air Force duffel bag. I found it in a closet when I was packing to leave for Africa in 1984. I was heading to Zaire as a Peace Corps volunteer to teach protein-starved villagers how to build fish ponds. I pulled the duffel bag out of the closet and discovered it in good condition. Our family name was stenciled across the canvas. I decided to use the bag to carry my things to Zaire.

Living conditions in Zaire were hard. Into my father's duffel bag I stuffed a mosquito net, a Swiss army knife, a flashlight, boots. Then I hesitated. Taking the Air Force bag might be a mistake, I thought. The blue military color might cause uneasiness among Zairians who remembered 1960. In that year the Central Intelligence Agency orchestrated the assassination of Patrice Lumumba, Zaire's first and only democratically elected prime minister. Lumumba was the shining Kennedy figure of Zairian history. He was young, intelligent, full of vision. Then our country helped kill him. An authoritarian government backed by the U.S. eventually gained control after the assassination and has ruled in Zaire ever since. The government has abolished political freedoms and led the country into economic collapse.

I was about to put my father's duffel bag back in the closet when a quick re-examination assuaged my concerns. The bag, I noticed, had faded over the years to a blue-white color pale enough to hide its original purpose. I went ahead and used it. I took the duffel bag, this veteran of the Cuban missile crisis, with me on my two-year trip to Africa as a development worker sent to alleviate poverty my country had helped create.

I have recently returned home from my work abroad, and my father and I have spent considerable time swapping stories about our different rites of service. Neither of us has any regrets. We support the respective government policies we helped carry out. Besides, regrets would be out of place. We're an American family. Contradictory experiences are normal. We both did what our country said was right. And we both worked to carry out the orders of the same president: John F. Kennedy.

The Peace Corps will no doubt be around when my son reaches the age when he decides to leave home and serve. World poverty isn't going anywhere. It'll be around, if he's interested. And so will the Air Force. And so will the CIA. I know which one I hope he chooses. ■

Mike Tidwell is a writer living in Atlanta. He is writing a book about his experiences working with African peasants in Zaire.



Collage by Peter Hannan

Some explosive tales of the freedom blighters

Brought to Light

By Joyce Brabner, Alan Moore, Bill Sienkiewicz, Tom Yeates, et al.
Eclipse Books (Box 1099,
Forestville, CA 95436), 68 pp., \$8.95

By Jim Naureckas

IF WARNER BOOKS HAD HAD ITS WAY *Brought to Light* might never have seen the light of day. But Eclipse Comics, which originated the project, managed to produce and distribute the contragate comic book without the conglomerate's help—albeit not until after the election of George Bush.

As Eclipse tells the story (Warner has no comment), Warner invited itself to participate in *Brought to Light*, Eclipse's effort to explain the Christic Institute's affidavit in comic book form. Lawyers from the institute, a non-profit legal group involved in litigation against Iran-contra participants, had seen an earlier Eclipse production, *Real War Stories*, and thought that the comics format would be an effective way of explaining their complicated case.

Warner—part of the Warner Communications Group, which also owns DC Comics—was supposed to provide promotion, bookstore distribution and financial backing for the book. (Though it has the format of a comic book, it's really an oversized paperback—known in the trade as

COMICS

a "graphic novel.")

But as the project came to fruition, Warner apparently got cold feet. "What if George Bush gets elected, and we all go to jail?" a Warner executive reportedly asked Eclipse editors.

The Warner Communications hierarchy has a tradition of political squeamishness. In 1973, it was involved in a battle with Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman over their book, *The Washington Connection and Third World Fascism*, which Warner published but refused to distribute, citing its "unpatriotic" message.

The Washington Connection was eventually republished by South End Press, and *Brought to Light* has a similarly happy ending, with Eclipse managing to print and distribute 50,000 copies. But the apparent attempt by Warner execs to table the book on political grounds is an example of how comics are being taken more seriously these days—if someone wants to censor them, they must be doing something right.

Unknown comics: Despite a long tradition of underground comic books with political themes, comic books have usually been considered preadolescent amusements unsuitable for serious political messages.

But with the rise of independent (i.e., not DC or Marvel) comic book companies that aim at older readers, comics have become more literate, and the success of books like *Maus*, *The Dark Knight Returns* and *Watchmen* has won new respect for the medium.

While those works all dealt on their own terms with serious issues, *Brought to Light* goes a step farther in taking sides in a contemporary, real-world political controversy. In this perilous terrain it succeeds remarkably well, a major accomplishment not only for comics but for

the attempted assassination of dissident contra leader Eden Pastora that left five journalists dead and became the focus of the Christic suit, which was dismissed by a federal court and is now on appeal (see story on page 4). Though credited to Martha Honey and Tony Avirgan, the suit's journalist-plaintiffs, and to the Christic Institute, "Flashpoint" was actually written by ("told to") Joyce Brabner, the guiding force and co-author of *Real War Stories*, Eclipse's previous venture into nonfiction comics.

Brabner tells the complex story of how a bomb was planted at a Pastora

Despite a long tradition of underground comic books with political themes, comic books have usually been considered preadolescent amusements unsuitable for serious political messages. But literate comic books such as *Maus* and *Watchmen* have won new respect for the medium.

political art in general.

In form, the book is what's known as a "topsy-turvy," two books in one, one upside down in relation to the other so that there are two front covers. It's an effective gimmick, as each side depends on the other for its full impact.

One half is "Flashpoint: The La Penca Bombing," telling the story of

press conference, and how investigators came to believe that the CIA was responsible. (The chief suspect, admitted CIA agent John Hull, was recently arrested in Costa Rica on drug and weapons charges.)

Brabner's style is straightforward and unembellished, minimizing propaganda points in favor of a persuasive marshaling of evidence. The



uncluttered, open-ended narrative style is reminiscent of the deadpan slice of life in *American Splendor*, the comic put out by Brabner's husband, Harvey Pekar.

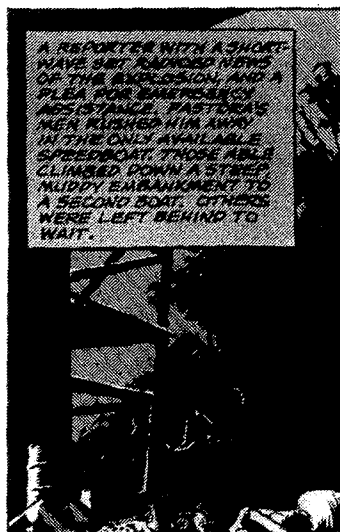
The text is complemented by artist Tom Yeates' clean visual style.

His approach relies heavily on photographs and video for references. But Yeates departs from the standard comic book grid pattern, using floating panels and superimpositions to follow the fragmented story in a way that clarifies rather than confuses: Hull pops up to recruit a mercenary, a drug dealer's interview from the news show *West 57th* explains the contra-cocaine connection, and Bush makes a cameo appearance to sneer at the Christic Institute. If you've ever had trouble following the byzantine twists of the Christic story, this comic may actually clear things up for you.

Life imitates comics: Yeates has often worked on comics with political themes, like *Real War Stories*, *Scout* and *Timespirits* (though he was also chosen by Michael Jackson to draw the *Captain Eo* comic book). One of Yeates' earlier projects was *Swamp Thing*, a comic book that has parallels to the La Penca story—the hero is the victim of a bombing, but survives to seek retribution against the shadowy organization that planted the bomb.

Swamp Thing often battled the Sunderland Corporation, a corporate spin-off of a shadowy intelligence agency, headed by a "retired" general. Visually, the general was a dead ringer for Al Haig, but otherwise he and his enterprise were an uncanny foreshadowing of Richard Secord and company.

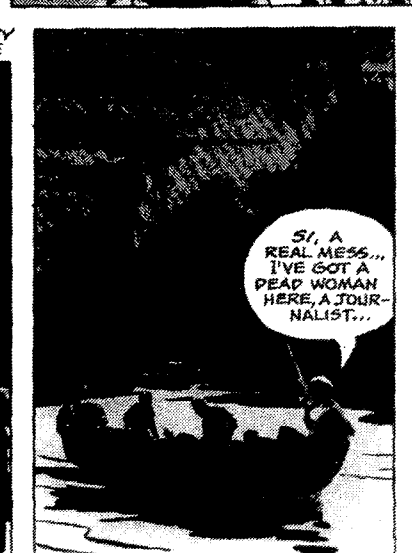
Swamp Thing later featured Alan



IT TOOK 4 HOURS FOR THAT BOAT TO RETURN, THEN 5 MORE HOURS BY RIVER AND BUMPY BACK ROADS TO A RURAL HOSPITAL...



TONY HEARD HER SCREAM WHEN THEY FINALLY CARRIED HER DOWN TO THE BOAT.



Brought to Light: Flashpoint—The La Penca Bombing

Moore, who wrote the other half of *Brought to Light*—"Shadowplay: The Secret Team." Moore is probably the most celebrated writer working in comics today, creator of such landmark series as *Watchman*, *Miracleman* and *V for Vendetta*. His comics ruthlessly deconstruct the superhero mythos, and at the same time use those heroes to challenge the prevailing myths of the real world.

"Shadowplay" is his first collaboration with Bill Sienkiewicz, a wildly original artist best known for his work on *The New Mutants*, *Elektra* and the bizarre *Stray Toasters*. Working in a riot of styles and mediums, including pen and ink, watercolor, acrylic, crayon and xerography, Sienkiewicz creates art that is at once frightening, wickedly funny and deeply resonant.

Moore's and Sienkiewicz' visions

mesh in "Shadowplay," ostensibly a summary of the Christic Institute's affidavit in support of the suit, but really an attempt to come to grips emotionally with the horror behind 30 years of covert activity. The tale is narrated by a nightmarish eagle, a representative of "The Company" who proudly tells the history of his business, a story whose bloodiness is literally measured in swimming pools.

The main characters will be familiar to contragate buffs, the ex-CIA businessmen that the Christic dubs the "secret team": Ted Shackley as a pointy-toothed mongoose, Richard Secord as a buzzard and Tom Clines as a rattlesnake. But Moore relies on sources beyond the Christic affidavit, notably William Blum's book, *The CIA: A Forgotten History*.

Goddamn heroes: Although

Moore sometimes lets his Englishness slip (he suggests that Kennedy could have beat Nixon in 1968—for a third term—if he had lived), his political analysis is sharper than the Christic Institute's. Moore understands that when the CIA spins off corporate entities of the type the Christic suit focuses on, the agency does not lose contact or necessarily even control over these entities—it just loses any accountability for their actions.

As the Company eagle puts it, "America protected the world, the CIA protected America, Shackley, Clines and Secord protected the CIA, and that's why they're Goddamn heroes!"

"Shadowplay" gains credibility from the restrained argument of "Flashpoint," which in turn derives emotional impact from the raw fury

of the other chapter. The two parts are hinged by a satirical cartoon and covert action map by Paul Mavrides, an underground cartoonist who edits *Anarchy Comics*.

Brought to Light is getting a strong critical response, and Eclipse plans to issue similar releases in the future. A sequel to its "Iran-contra Scandal Trading Cards" (see *In These Times*, Dec. 7, 1988), to be called "Friendly Dictators Trading Cards," is due in April with art by Sienkiewicz and text by *In These Times* contributor Dennis Bernstein.

Eclipse is reprinting a comic called *El Salvador: A House Divided*, originally self-published by Montana activist Bill Tulp. Eclipse also has a number of fiction titles, like *Miracleman* and *Scout* that are not intended to be soapboxes but nonetheless handle political issues in a creative

and mature fashion.

Projects like these show that, despite their association with juvenilia, comics can communicate political messages, combining TV's visual effectiveness with print media's ability to present information at a relatively low cost.

This is a lesson the U.S. government has already learned: both "Flashpoint" and "Shadowplay" contain excerpts from a CIA comic distributed in Nicaragua that informs readers how to smash traffic lights, create Molotov cocktails and call in sick for work. If cutbacks ever force the CIA to let its propaganda specialists go, they may have jobs waiting for them at *Anarchy Comics*. ■

Jim Naureckas, a former staff writer for *In These Times*, has written extensively on the Iran-contra scandal.

And Still They Dance: Women, War, and the Struggle for Change in Mozambique

By Stephanie Urdang
Monthly Review Press
256 pp., \$12.00

By James North

MAINSTREAM AMERICAN MEDIA attention to atrocities in the Third World is notoriously selective. In the mid-'70s, the name of murderous Cambodian dictator Pol Pot became rightly synonymous with slaughter. Yet how many Americans would also recognize the name of Suharto, the Indonesian general who rose to power in 1965 amid a wave of massacres that destroyed an estimated 500,000 people, and whose troops have killed as many as another 100,000 during and since the 1975 invasion of the territory of East Timor?

In southern Africa, the mainstream press has been similarly reticent. By now Mozambique ought to have attracted dozens of reporters and television crews to document the terrible atrocities that bands of rebels, directed and supplied by South Africa, are carrying out across that country. There is no real controversy over the facts. Last April, the U.S. State Department issued a detailed report that estimated that the Renamo rebels had already murdered as many as 100,000 people. One State Department official, Roy A. Stacy, said, "What has emerged in Mozambique is one of the most brutal holocausts against ordinary human beings since World War II."

Selective non-reporting: It is hard to understand why Maputo, the Mozambican capital, is not today as choked with reporters as the Thai-Cambodian border was back in 1979-80, or why the same TV crews that range regularly into Afghanistan to document Soviet war crimes cannot find their way to Africa. Remoteness is obviously not the issue. Mozambique's government has been hospitable to journalists and would welcome the attention.

The difference, of course, is that

Mozambican women balance between future and past

those who have been responsible for the killings in Asia are "communists" of one form or another. Those ultimately responsible in southern Africa are South Africans, the leaders of the apartheid regime. The Reagan-Bush administration has set the agenda for double standards, and the mainstream press has once again tacitly gone along.

The agony in Mozambique would be horrifying under any circumstances. But Stephanie Urdang's *And Still They Dance* shows clearly that Mozambique's tragedy has painful implications beyond its own borders. That country is one of the few in the Third World that has been trying, in fits and starts, to improve life for the vast majority of its people who are poor. In particular, Mozam-

AFRICA

bique has been trying to emancipate women from their traditional second-class position. South Africa's surrogate war is disrupting some important efforts—efforts that have included bad mistakes—that could teach people elsewhere in Africa and in other poor nations of the world.

Under extreme poverty, women's work is unbelievably hard. Urdang, a freelance writer who has also consulted on women's issues for the U.N., made several lengthy trips to Mozambique over a seven-year period. She includes a powerful description of the women who start working in the fields before dawn: "The most vivid image of women in Mozambique is that of a woman in her *machamba*, or family plot, legs straight, her body forming a V as hour after hour she is bent over double, hoeing, sowing, weeding, day in and day out, under clear skies and hot sun."

Never done: At noon, the women, many with infants strapped to their backs, leave the fields due to the

heat. But their work is far from over. Many tasks that we take for granted, like getting fuel and water, require hours of toil. During recent droughts in Mozambique, women have walked up to 25 miles to fetch water. They return with containers balanced on their heads, leaves placed on the surface to prevent the loss of even a few precious drops, gliding along with grace and courage despite the weight. Washing is all done by hand. Back at the hut the women pound maize or husk rice. There are no convenience foods to shorten the hours of cooking. All the while, mothers keep an eye on their offspring and intermittently nurse their infants.

Over the years, of course, women in the West have also known hard work. But in Mozambique, the drudgery is compounded by traditional unequal social relations that Western feminists have not had to confront, at least not recently. Polygamy seems to be declining, but it is still practiced across southern Africa. *Lobolo*, or bride price, also undermines the status of women.

At first the idea that a prospective husband must pay a considerable sum (in money, cattle or other goods) to his wife's family may sound like a sign of deep respect. In fact, as Urdang shows with some firsthand examples, the practice actually binds the wife to her in-laws like a piece of property. She is hesitant to leave an abusive marriage because she must repay the *lobolo*, and this powerlessness can leave her something near a slave.

During the 10-year war for independence, the liberation movement Frelimo promised that it would end more than just Portuguese colonialism, which was characterized by forced labor and secret police. Frelimo was one of the few Third World movements that genuinely sought to change certain traditions that had preceded colonialism, certain ways

of life that the movement argued were unfair and hampered real development. When independence was won in 1975, Frelimo moved to outlaw or restrict polygamy and *lobolo*. It also created a national women's organization (the OMM), and started campaigns in literacy and health that tried to raise the status of women.

Frelimo abuses: Not surprisingly, the old customs are not dying easily. On Urdang's first visits to some villages, she was told officially that the traditional practices had ended, only to discover later that polygamists were still adding wives and *lobolo* survived in modified form as "a gratification gift." She also found that the OMM functioned more to transmit the Frelimo government's policies than as an autonomous organization that fought for women's rights. Even worse, she learned about serious abuses of human rights during "Operation Production," the 1983 effort to clear the

Atrocities and unrest in Mozambique ought to have attracted dozens of reporters and television crews by now.

cities of people who did not seem to be working. Thousands of people were moved to distant rural areas without due process, including many women who were classified as "prostitutes" mainly because they were single.

Mozambique is one of the world's 25 poorest countries. It has been independent for only 13 years. Even during times of peace and prosperity it would take generations to carry through sweeping improvements in

the status of women. Such changes cannot be simply imposed; people must genuinely make them part of their own lives. But apartheid's war against the country, together with a series of parching droughts, has strained Mozambique beyond belief. The Renamo rebels seek out and assassinate health workers, teachers and anyone else connected with the state. Refugees, both internal and those who have fled to neighboring countries, are estimated to number in the hundreds of thousands.

This kind of fear, disruption and hunger does not help men and women change old ways of thinking and behaving toward each other; merely surviving is struggle enough. But Urdang reports that despite the terrible obstacles, there are still signs of hope in Mozambique.

In one of the book's most arresting images, Urdang visits the Moamba State Farm. In the distance she sees four big tractors chugging through a field, plowing. The tractors wheel. There are unexpected flashes of color. They are *capulanas*, the long, brightly patterned skirts that Mozambican women wear.

This is an astonishing scene in rural southern Africa. Men in America should think back to the first time they saw a woman police officer driving a squad car alone and multiply those feelings of unsettled consternation several times to get a sense of how disconcerting the women tractor drivers appear to many men in Mozambique.

Before independence, one of the drivers, Gilda Mohlanga, had been a washerwoman for a Portuguese family. They had given her only stale corn porridge to eat and had beaten her, sometimes just because they didn't like the way she hung out the wash. At first she had trouble keeping the tractor going in a straight line. But after a couple of weeks she started plowing. By now her achievement is certainly part of a new folklore that has spread hundreds of miles, to villages that she has never seen. ■

James North, former *In These Times* South Africa correspondent, is author of *Freedom Rising*.

START

Continued from page 3

United Nations, Gorbachov began to undermine some of START's opponents by offering deep cuts in conventional forces. Opposition to START is sometimes expressed in the fear that nuclear arms reductions will leave Europe unprotected against ostensibly superior Soviet conventional ground forces. Gorbachov's unilateral reduction of men and materiel in central Europe goes a long way toward vitiating this argument. Moreover, his move makes it clear that additional cuts can be gained by serious negotiations. Gorbachov will likely make further offers that increase the pressure on the Bush administration to conclude an arms reduction treaty quickly.

This question, now merely of historical interest, remains: why was the START negotiation not brought to a successful conclusion by President Reagan as a way to secure his place in history? All that kept the START agreement from being finalized was his administration's refusal to concede that cuts in offensive weapons had the potential to turn defensive systems, like Star Wars, into a shield behind which an aggressor could launch a first strike.

Why was that final concession not made? According to some sources, Reagan was in fact willing to admit some link between offense and defense. By this account, the resignation of Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger at the end of 1987 removed the only administration member with the strong-mindedness to insist that the various armed services accept the 50 percent cutback. Reagan himself was too passive to undertake the task, and Frank Carlucci, the new secretary of defense, too weak to overcome bu-

reaucratic wagon-circling. Weinberger, of course, opposed the START treaty. If this is correct, Weinberger's resignation, far from acknowledging the treaty's inevitability, was instead a ploy to block it.

At any rate, the START agreement that was within reach was never grasped by the Reagan administration, despite the real possibilities at and after the Moscow summit in the spring of 1988. But immediately after the November election, Gorbachov invited himself to the U.S. to tell President-elect Bush in person that the deal could still be struck. Bush, who had not requested the meeting and insisted that he had no authority to talk with Gorbachov, was non-committal except to say that a treaty could not be reached quickly.

Nonetheless, Star Wars, the major stumbling block in the Reagan years, was not cited by Bush as a reason for delay. Official Washington now seems to believe that Star Wars, the nuclear Astrodome, is dead. Indeed, secretary of defense-designate Tower waited only a week after the Reagans had left Washington to say as much. Lt. Gen. James Abrahamson, head of the Pentagon's Strategic Defense Initiative Organization, has resigned his position, a clear sign that careers are no longer to be made in the Star Wars business.

Though some form of defense research will no doubt continue and no public obituary can be expected, with the passing of the Reagan administration, Star Wars is lumbering off to the graveyard of What Never Was.

Alan Gilchrist is a professor of psychology at Rutgers University and a member of the Union of Concerned Scientists. Louise Halper is a member of the Lawyers Alliance for Nuclear Arms Control.

Italy

Continued from back page

affiliation is with the Radical Party led by Marco Pannella, a gentleman whose equivalent in America would be a sort of unimaginable combination of Tip O'Neill, Abbie Hoffman and Lenny Bruce.

At the same time, Europe's pop press was highlighting Kitty Kelley's acidic biography of Frank Sinatra. It gave particular attention to an old quote of Old Blue Eyes. In those ancient Kennedy days when liberalism and sexism were still sexy, Frank had described Nancy Reagan, the woman to whom he lately functioned as *cavaliere servente*, as a "dope with fat ankles."

Taken discretely and at face value, as Americans are wont to do, these items amounted to little more than gossip column tripe. But in this brave new era of inanity, particularly the highly sophisticated, connective and endlessly analyzed sort practiced by Europeans, they took on far greater significance. They put the exclamation point to the end of American cultural hegemony in the West.

The continental drift: Ever since World War II, when the British complained that the problem with Americans was that they were "overpaid, oversexed and over here," Europe, like all good capitalist places, has tempered ego with envy. Ours is older and better but their is newer and easier, continentals kvetched. Then, sometime between the late '60s and mid-'70s, Europe discovered America in its own backyard in the shape of gaping malls on the periphery of its medieval towns and by way of *Dallas* and *Dynasty*.

That's when new and easy became nouveau and sleazy. One turn in a hypermarket with a shopping cart and envy instantly turned into ennui. Europeans were disillusioned to learn

that America consisted largely of Japanese-made products and their Bolivian-induced advertisements. Both promised more satisfaction than they delivered. And if you had to have a stand-up commodity fronting the march to empty materialism, wasn't *La Cicciolina* a more pleasurable and honest personification of Europe's jaded bourgeois yearnings than were Ron and Nancy? She, after all, actually delivered on late night Italian commercial television what Americans merely metaphorically expected from their politicians.

Set, game and match to Italy.

But wait a minute. The U.S. supermarket checkout press, artfully mixing vile rumor with hype for Kitty Kelley's newest biography, lately purports that no-saying Nancy had been the sultana of sluts back in the days before Ronnie made her his crone. Names are named—but only of dead Hollywood swordsmen such as Peter Lawford and Robert Walker who, if only a portion of the stories about them are true, must have died happy of sheer exhaustion. Can this be a devious, or more likely Deaverite, effort by the Reaganauts to reclaim the low ground of free-world trivialization for America? If it is, it's obviously too little too late.

What would you rather watch on cable: a merely putatively promiscuous Nancy Reagan in *Hellcats of the Navy* or a truly lascivious *La Cicciolina* in *Hot Paprika*?

Yes, the world would rather be in Italy. America has to face up to a new challenge that goes beyond trade balances and variations on the techniques of automobile assembly. Having opted for vacuity, apparent power and shameless indifference to reality, it must confront the land of Nero and his fiddle.

Maybe, with soft work and desiccation, we can reclaim the title of last best hope of humanity. But for now, let's send out for pizza.

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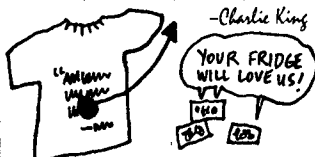
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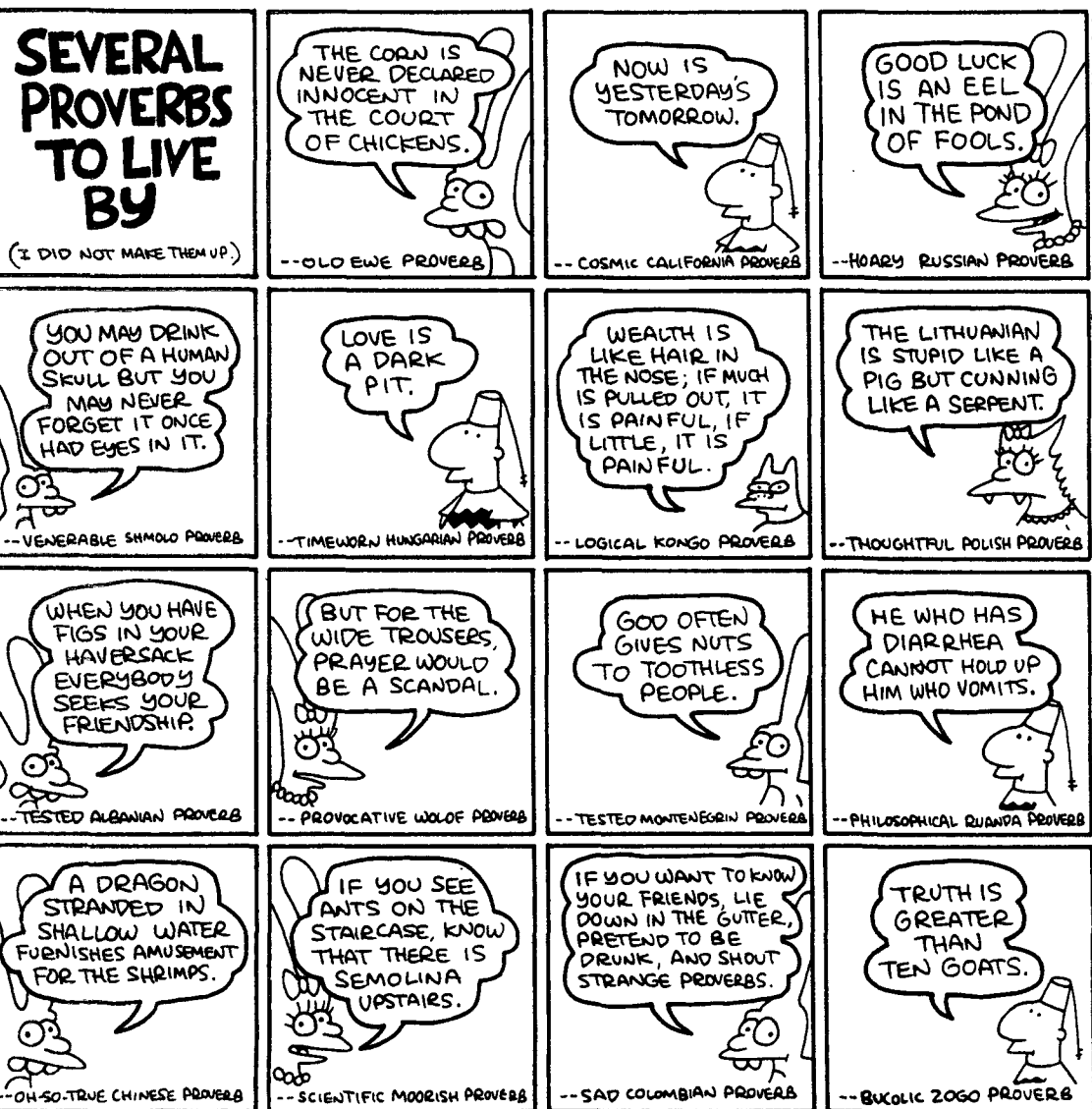
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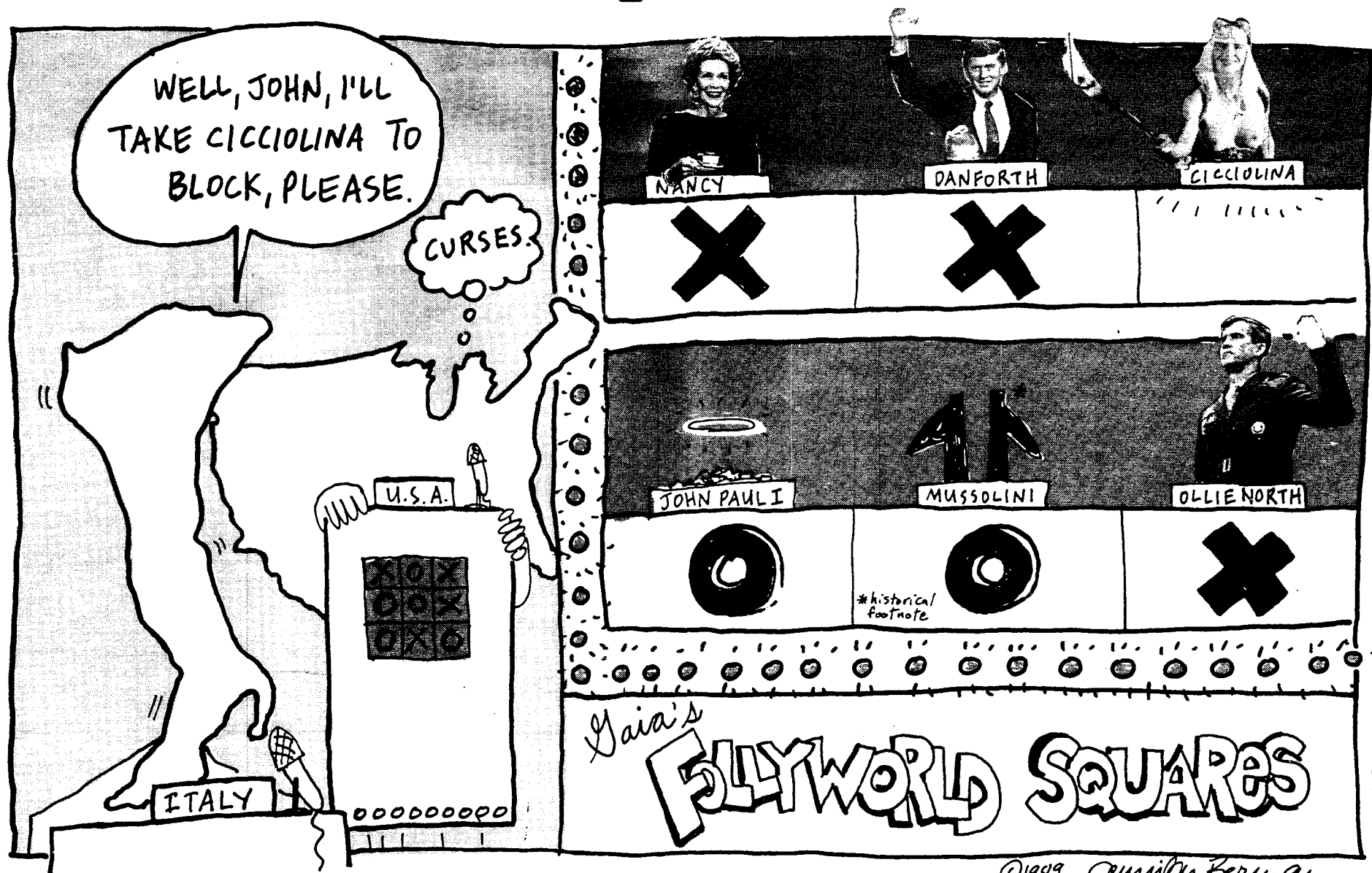
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Italy is it

Italy gives the boot to America in the annual competition for the title of "least serious bourgeois state."



By Peter Karman

AS NOSTALGIA FOR THE REAGAN ERA grows in the weeks since the erstwhile president returned his thinking hat to a Hollywood prop room, one of the favorite patriotic slogans from that magic time has already begun to fade like the hues in a '50s Eastmancolor adventure from Republic Pictures.

Consensus Christendom (CC), Western civilization's leading polling organization, reports that, believe it or not, Italy has replaced the U.S. as the "last best hope of humanity." America may be the city on the hill, said one pollee, but Rome is a city on seven hills.

The glum news from the First World threatens to undermine the ongoing Reagan-Bush master plan to maintain America as the world's foremost apparent power while rival marketing giants Western Europe and Japan languish in their day-to-day subservience to substance.

CC's newest survey finds the little boot-shaped country-that-could outpacing awesome America in 14 out of 15 categories, ranging from "best anticipated meal" to "preferred military posture." The U.S. topped the ratings only in the category of "hoped-for improvement in postal service."

Trivial cahoots: The results mark a stunning reversal for both countries, which in recent years have vied in vacuity for the title of least serious bourgeois state. That dubious distinction is conferred by public opinion on the nation most apt to treat the trivial importantly and the important trivially.

Italy had long held the title on the basis of its farcical politics, captious scandals, dissolute diversions and general aura of *dolce far niente*. Accordingly, the world developed the habit of looking upon events in Italy, no matter how horrendous, more with whimsy than concern. Remember that clown Mussolini?

The seesaw of civilizations, empires won and squandered, pagan and holy pestilences, barren victories and profitable defeats produced so much history and world-weariness for Italy that the sunny land was granted license to treat only comedy as divine. Then, after a thousand years of talking trash and celebrating appearance over reality, Italians were nonplussed at the news that upstart America, with barely two centuries of posturing on the historical stage, was briskly and bulbously inflating as the new global demiurge of drivel.

Italy valiantly attempted to retain the title first by choosing a vicar of Rome back in 1978 who died of embarrassment within a month's time and then replacing him with a foreigner who mocked another of America's favorite myths by making the in-

disputable claim that only in communist Poland could a poor boy grow up to speak 15 languages and become pope.

The U.S. then took the offensive with the Reagan candidacy. A prime requisite for unserious states is to select leaders who, by embodying a rare confluence of national and personal quirks, manage at one and the same time to inspire pride at home and mockery abroad. Hapsburg Austria held sway for decades with its catatonic emperor, Franz Joseph, whose stern but blank visage was an advertisement for the morbidity of monarchy. Italy's first winning candidate was its miniature king, Victor Emmanuel III, who sat a horse like a chipmunk on a Great Dane. But then old Vic gave way to the overblown Mussolini, who like Ronald Reagan, provoked early hope among the wealthy classes that he could reinvigorate capitalism by making a big show of things.

Reagan, rising out of Bel Air on a vast and vapid cloud of chaff and tinsel, was everywhere hailed as the harbinger of the new American inanity. For a time, the Reaganauts seems invincible. Like fascist-era Italy, which took wonderful pride in carrying out air strikes on Abyssinian huts, Reaganaut America puffed with self-satisfaction at its ability to strangle the kitten called Grenada and to strafe Tripolitan tents.

Going in style: But the world was getting

less excited by puerile militarism and more turned on by that combination of sensation and style that the megazines call postmodernism. And it was within this cultural sea change that Italy came into its own. The big year was 1987.

In the states, the eternally provincial press was reading the decline of Reaganism and the recrudescence of liberalism out of the then incubating Iran-contra scandal and Republican losses in the congressional elections. But in Europe, news magazines like Italy's *Espresso* and *Panorama*, France's *Paris-Match* and *Hebdo*, and Germany's *Stern* and *Bunte* were highlighting more telling signs of the times. One was the exemplary democratic decision of Italian voters to elect Ilona Staller, otherwise known as *La Cicciolina*, a Hungarian-born porn star, as a parliamentary deputy on a "nooky not nukes" platform.

She provided a new meaning to the term political exposé by refusing to skirt the issues. Never, in any of the Western democracies, has the citizenry been given a more up-front and personal view of one of their legislators. While ordinary politicians shook the hands and patted the backs of their constituents, *La Cicciolina* offered her bare breasts, at a minimum, to those who would press the flesh. She still sits, and occasionally squats, in the National Assembly. Her

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